

14 August 1979

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Lady Allan. There will be no Meditation Meeting in September, but there is a Work-In on September 9th – Sunday – and there is a list in the hall for names.

Dr. Roles. Looking round this big room at the faces of so many friends, one recalls in a flash how *different* people are, and what different lives they lead. Though this is a Meditation Meeting, we have to remember that while Meditation is the most direct and most accessible, yet it is not the *only* way. In illustration of this H.H. once told this story to his people at the Ashram:

S. Someone went to a Realized man and asked how he could find God. The reply he got was: 'Run and keep running till you fall down exhausted, and then you will find God.'

The man said: 'I'm not very good at running, couldn't I find God by just sitting still?' He was told: 'Yes, you can. Running is *one* way, but not the *only* way. There are many different ways for different people. What matters is that they should fix their hearts and minds upon God and direct all their efforts accordingly.'

His Holiness added: Just so, the Meditation is one way, but it is not the *only* way.
(based on Record, 15 February 1973)

Both now and in future we want our Society, centred in this House, to be for *all* genuine seekers after spiritual realization, providing something for everybody who asks us for help.

(PAUSE)

Dr. R. We're hoping that there will be enough contributors for us to bring out a fourth issue of *The Bridge* sometime in the autumn: so do come forward. There is no specific subject but one or two of the articles will be about the relation between moments of awakening and the experiences which are being reported and collected about what happens at death, where states of consciousness are experienced by a few people out of a whole lot – experience varies tremendously; states of consciousness are experienced, some of which are delectable and could be described as heavenly, which bear a relation not only to experiences we all get from time to time, either in a severe illness in a near-death situation, but more commonly in quiet times, for instance in the night or in the early morning which are partial experiences of exactly the same thing. It begins to become clear why certain methods, like the Meditation, are used on the spiritual path and why instructions are given, like the necessity for inner silence and peace. Because only that, if practised for a long time before one's time to die comes, will enable us to make sure of getting these marvellous experiences.

Any questions about that – I don't know if any of this has aroused your interest in any way? I know it has with our psychiatrist (Dr. Dale Beckett). Has it occurred to you to connect the two – that, in a sense, everything we do on the spiritual path is a preparation for our next journey as well as for this life?

Lady A. Dr. Roles, when we were last in India the Shankaracharya spoke of this to you in relation to the parable of the wedding garment.

Dr. R. Yes, my wife and I asked a joint question about the meaning of the story of the people who were invited to the wedding from the hedgerows and ditches and the man who was thrown out because he didn't have a wedding garment. Surely a very strange thing to happen when he had been dragged off the street to a party (laughter) so it must therefore have an inner meaning. He said that a few people did get the experience of a wedding with the Creator and that those were the people who would have made for themselves a wedding garment beforehand. It's all part of the same thing because if you know the direction you're wanting to go in and giving up everything else but the thought of the Creator, every half-hour's Meditation could be more effective than it usually is.

Any questions about that? Not only Meditation, Turning and Movements?

There are many ways. Somebody went to the Holy Man and asked how to find God and the Holy Man said that you could find Him by running until you dropped. And the man said he wasn't very good at running, couldn't he do it sitting still? and the Holy man said Yes, he could do it any way, running is only one way, but the great thing is that nothing should be going on as a rival inside you – no rival aim.

I always say 'Any questions?' and don't give them time to ask!

Q. Are loving thoughts of other people rivals?

Dr. R. No, no – they're in line – during one's ordinary life, the more one loves the creations of the Param-Atman, the more one loves the Param-Atman.

Q. Can one love evil people without being defiled?

Dr. R. Yes, yes, one can, but I shouldn't do too much of it (laughter)! What one shouldn't do in the supreme moment of union with the Creator, one shouldn't think of anybody or anything else – it only means a loss of attention and the loss of a wonderful opportunity.

Mrs. Edwards. During the last Meditation Meeting I was presented with a very clear feeling of the gunas represented by the three syllables of the Mantra and it struck me that only when the three became one, could one enter the Fourth Room. Could you say anything about this?

Dr. R. Yes, that is very, very true and the three sounds of the Mantra becoming one is in line with the fact that one can only enter the Fourth Room with consciousness when the meditator, that's you and me, the Meditation itself (the Mantra) and the object of Meditation (which is the Universal Self) become one. In becoming one the three sounds of the Mantra help to bring that about. A lot of people have found that.

The thing which is holding us all back very much is the non-recognition that the Atman – the Self – inhabits *simultaneously* three worlds so different that we can, each of us, be said to have three bodies – physical, subtle and Causal. We still take almost everything through this active hemisphere from the point of view of the physical body and external physical existence with a dash of psychology when it suits us! We don't realise that most of the instructions the Shankaracharya and other teachers give are for the subtle body – the

personal psychology – which each of us has to get through before we get these marvellous visions which come from the third – the Causal world. We don't realise that the physical body not only can't live for a moment on its own but that it can't set anything in motion, it's an automaton. It is set in motion by the subtle body. Everything dates back in time to the mind and from that to the mind and feeling and from that to the Causal – the soul, consciousness and the Atman. We don't realise that although everything has to be manifested in the physical world, yet it can't be done without developing the other two, and particularly eliminating the personal psychology – the changing and changeable thoughts and feelings which interfere with our lives and interfere with our moment of death.

In view of that, I thought I could tell you a story again. It's brought to our minds again by the fact that when Miss Jami Harp got back to New York and reported about us most beautifully, and we've had several very cordial letters from Mr. Rabeneck and Katie Hager, they sent an extract of which we'll read two verses.

Lady A. (reading)

He who considers himself free is free indeed,
and he who considers himself bound is bound.

Through freedom one attains to happiness
through freedom to the highest, through
freedom to tranquillity, and through freedom
to the Supreme State.

Dr. R. It's not what one is – no trouble about that – it's what one *considers oneself to be* that can be changed and is so important. That extract comes from the *Ashtavakra Sambhita* of which Mr. Rabeneck says that nothing much is known about the author except that he was a follower of the original Shri Shankara and his teacher. One has been able to write back that a little something *is* known about the author because Ashtavakra means 'bent in eight places' – eight major articulations. It's one way of describing the rather limited possibilities of the body of flesh and bones.

To illustrate this, His Holiness told a story at a meeting at the Ashram (in 1970) to which the Allans went:

There was a Realized man who was also a king, called Janaka. One day while sitting on his throne he fell asleep and dreamt. He dreamt that he was attacked and lost his throne and then wandered round penniless and persecuted by everyone. He eventually took to the forest starving. After long hard work he managed to gather enough fruit and vegetables to make a meal but, just as he had prepared it, two bulls appeared and trampled it all in passing. At this, the king began to weep and he woke up to find real tears pouring down and wetting his shoulder.

He then called all the pundits together and asked them to answer a question: which was 'real' (which belonged to the physical world and which to the subtle world) – the dream which produced real tears or his seat on the throne? He said he would handsomely reward anyone who could answer but would severely punish anyone whose answer proved false.

Various people tried to answer but the answer wasn't right and they were

punished. But there was a cripple from birth called Ashtavakra, which being translated means 'bent in eight places'. This man came to answer the question but when he started to climb the steps to the throne, because of his handicap he fell halfway up and all the courtiers laughed at him. He also started to laugh which greatly surprised them, so they asked 'Why are you laughing?' And he said, 'You laughed first, so you tell me.' (Laughter) They replied that they laughed because so many wise men – wise and great men – had tried to answer that question and failed and here was a wretch who couldn't even get up the steps and had the impertinence to suggest that he could answer.

He then said, 'Well, I laughed because you take all this for real, but the only reality in the Universe is the Atman – the Self.' The king understood this and although himself Realized, he became a pupil of Ashtavakra and in line with the tradition from which we get the Meditation.

(Record, 10 March 1970)

So the king's question was answered. Neither of the two worlds, (the physical and the subtle or dream world) is real. Only the Causal world when illumined by the Atman – (Pure Consciousness) – is 'Real' in the sense of 'Eternal and Unchanging'.

So we do know a little something that we can write back to Mr. Rabeneck about the author of these very lovely quotes. They are a bit advanced and I must say I will have to study them a lot in Majorca before I can begin to understand them.

Miss Wright. Dr. Roles, it's very interesting about dreams, even though that one in the story wasn't real, yet often through a dream one can learn things that are very real. Where do they come from?

Dr. R. Your question is in fact answered in this story where there are references to the *physical body* – the tears which were produced during the dream, the throne – references to the physical world; also appear references to the *subtle world* – his dream and all his feelings and his fears; and there also appear references to the *Causal world* which is concentrated in the fact that only the Atman is real – only the Self is real. In sleep, the Self very often has nothing in the way. In dreams one can experience the Self *direct*, and sometimes if you wake suddenly from deep sleep right up to full awakening, as one often does, you have experience of the Atman direct which is very like the experience these people describe in death. Everything has got out of the way. Only we have various degrees of that, don't we? We have small and large dreams, but the fact is that you are nearer the Divine Self in deep sleep than ordinarily.

Miss W. And can some dreams come from that level?

Dr. R. Yes, very much so! Such dreams are supposed to give insight on one's daily state, and if people who meditate are not getting that sort of dream they ought to enquire the reason why. Find some checker who has that sort of dream and ask!

Q. Sometimes I've had the same sort of awareness during sleep that I get sometimes in Meditation, is this connected with Meditation?

Dr. R. Yes, yes it is. The point is that in Meditation you try to keep awake – just keep the thread of consciousness. In sleep you don't; you want to sleep; you go to bed in order to sleep and that's where you should be sleeping. But if a bonus happens, it can happen in the middle of

the night. No night goes by, since Mr. Ouspensky's death, that I don't get something of the sort for which I am truly thankful. I don't think we would have understood the Shankaracharya if we hadn't had that preliminary training and means of guidance. I think we are very lucky!

Dr. Connell. Can dreams change a very deep-seated wrong point of view one may have had about oneself for some time?

Dr. R. Yes, they certainly can. There are several stories of Realized men about dreams and dream interpretation which illustrates that. I won't stop to tell them now but you probably recall them. So you've had a nice big change, have you Dr. Connell, through a dream? (laughter) That's lovely to think of! You're sure it *was* only a dream? (reply not audible)

Mr. Caiger-Smith. Dr. Roles, you mentioned a little time ago the disciple who was told he could find God by running or by sitting still, providing he did nothing else. Very often when one begins to meditate or has time for Meditation, there are many things going on inside one and outside. Can you say anything about beginning more easily to do just that and let the other part go? I'm really thinking about the very beginning of getting into the Meditation. Could you say something to make that beginning easier?

Dr. R. Well, partly one shouldn't go on sitting in the same posture which has failed one before or the same thoughts and interruptions will occur; partly, you should concentrate everything on the moment of sitting still and shutting your eyes in the symmetrical position with a straight back, but concentrate everything on the first five minutes. It's that first five minutes which determines the success or failure of any half-hour. Usually you find all the current conversations going on. You've got to dip right through those, leave them all behind, and dip through the layer of dreams as well, to the Causal level where *nothing* is going on – no movement at all. It's only a question of seeing where your profit lies and being really determined to enjoy the 'Peace of God that passes all understanding'. It's not any specific difficulty, it's just that you love too many things all at once. More than this Alan, a potter needs that especially; for from this subtle level come all the creative impulses that creative artists have. They come from the subtle level and are put into execution only if the person has the necessary physical skill and the necessary judgment. So art – great art – commands all three levels. So remember that when you're throwing a pot.

Q. I think it said in the reading that we are bound when we think we are. Does that mean that one clings to one's identifications?

Dr. R. Yes, it includes that, Mrs. Skeaping, but there is more to it also. We get, according to our own valuation of ourselves. If we value ourselves too small, we lose all that we have; we're slaves; we're mere automata. If we overvalue ourselves through Rajas guna, we fall flat on our faces, don't we? The other way – fall on your back or fall on your face! The great thing is to assess yourself at your right value, knowing that you are the son of God, the daughter of God. That you have all the potential of the human race inside you and all these things you call 'I' are not really truly yourself. They are just functions – just servants – not you. That's very important. I think it's the thing that holds us all back more than anything else. Wouldn't you say so? Either overvaluing or undervaluing ourselves.

Lady A. Yes, I think it's important. You once passed me in the passage – I was a great one for that – and you said, 'Hullo, how's the miserable sinner?' (laughter) That helped me enormously!

Dr. R. Yes, you alternated between being the best girl in the class and being the worst sort of sinner! (laughter)

Now let us meditate for a little because there is something rather nice to read if we can only get to this silence, give up everything else.

MEDITATION

It's meant to be gentle, a coming home, a meeting with one's Beloved, a dropping off all unwanted things.

Lady Allan will now read something to illustrate the fact that Meditation is the quickest, easiest way towards Self-realization under current Western conditions and it's a sort of Pilgrim's Progress with many stages from daytime sleep – sleeping people – through individual consciousness where you are conscious all at once of everything related to yourself to the Universal Consciousness which is occasionally experienced. The consciousness of Self is called Jiva-Atman and the Universal Consciousness is called Param-Atman. As part of the discipline of Meditation, it is suggested that we should think of Param-Atman *all* the time. Contract this habit long before we die, and Meditation becomes much easier and quite natural.

Lady A. This is from a talk at the Ashram on 10th March, 1974, when the Shankaracharya said:

While Param-Atman is never in doubt, the Jiva always lives in doubts. Owing to this, he is always wanting miracles to happen in order to establish his faith. He fails to realise that all the time he is living in the midst of the most wonderful miracles – the world. So much so that even his own six-foot body is such a miracle that science can only wonder at it without understanding it, for it is unable to create a single living cell. The total market value of all the *material* in the body – carbon, calcium, etc., – is hardly four rupees. And yet, what miracles are built out of it!

Again it is in the nature of the individual person – the Jiva – to be undergoing change every moment. These changes continually lead him to a state of indecision and forgetfulness so that he is never sure of himself. Thus he is unhappy. By contrast, one who has risen above his personal I-ishness is always sure of himself, never loses sight of his goal, never changes his chief aim. We also should try to rise above our personal natures so that the Jiva-Atman can be in constant touch with the Param-Atman. Just as our own sun has never known darkness. (Dr. R. Have you realised that? The sun can never know darkness and has never known darkness) In fact, the thought of Param-Atman alone can dispel unhappiness immediately.

By nature, the Jiva is a worshipper of splendour. He is apt, therefore, to be led away by worldly glamour. But the magnificence of Divine wealth is invisible to the naked eye though it is only that which matters. Joy is the Param-Atman's eternal food, but the Jiva cannot be pleased for long. Again, neither time – the past, present and future – nor the limitation of space exists for Param-Atman which lives in the Eternal present.

What we call 'good' and what we call 'evil', both exist in the world as necessary

antidotes to each other. At times the good becomes proud of itself and therefore it ceases to be good. Then evil arises to destroy it. Similarly when the evil outstrips its functions, it is destroyed by a fresh surge of good. We see examples of this in history and especially in times like ours when everything is in the melting pot. The choice before each of us during every day is described in the opening verses of the 16th Chapter of the *Gita*.

Valour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from hate and vanity, these stem from the God-like qualities, O Arjuna. Hypocrisy, pride, insolence, cruelty, ignorance are born of the god-less qualities. God-like qualities lead to liberation, godless to imprisonment. Fear nothing, Prince, you have the God-like qualities.

Dr. R. And one can say that of everybody in this room. Fear nothing, because we all have the God-like qualities as well as certain other ones. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here! This is what I mean by valuing oneself at one's right level. Encouraging what will lead to happiness and liberation and simply turning a blind eye to the other.

(PAUSE)

Well now before we meet again, (to Lady Allan) you will have gone with your daughter Jane and returned after leading out a party of four others who have never been to India, so you'll have to see that they end up in the right place.

Lady A. That'll be very difficult!

Dr. R; Yes, it is difficult, but you are quite equal to it! The idea is that after Lord Allan died the Shankaracharya offered to see Lady Allan and anybody whom we thought might be a possible successor to him. We feel that times are changing (circumstances in the outside world of human social life, as well as new generations coming up). As my own generation passes off the stage, it may well be that a new starting point has to be reached by an organisation like this, and our groups all round the world are feeling the same thing. They are waiting for some new direction more in keeping with today's thoughts. For instance, when our System first came to Europe, they had to be terribly secretive about it. And in Medieval times there were persecutions, burnings at the stake and so on. But there is no reason why, nowadays when it's a free-for-all, that one shouldn't feel much freer to meditate when one wants, to speak out loud about the importance of True Knowledge and Meditation, not to make claims, but to see that the message gets to more people. It may be that the Shankaracharya will have some ideas about this. Are there any other questions that you would like asked – important questions – by these six people when they go?

Mr. Hodge. You speak of real and unreal. Could you say that things which are passing are unreal and that things which are permanent are real?

Dr. R. I think that you are absolutely right, Hodge, yes. He seems to be using the word 'Real' in that way when he says that the Atman or the Creator is the only permanent Reality. Everything else is changing all the time. All the material and subtle worlds are changing all the time.

One thing which will have to be taken into account has emerged from this literature about the experiences of people as they pass through death from physical life and which

comes out in such a large number of independent descriptions by people who haven't been indoctrinated – just ordinary people. The state of consciousness they were in when they died either by accident or from sudden illness (like heart failure) continues although their body is completely discarded. They go on thinking the same thoughts and looking at things in the same way as previously. It seems abundantly clear that consciousness does not end when the body dies. It changes, but it doesn't finish, any more than on waking after deep sleep at night, we find that consciousness has not disappeared and you know when you wake up that you have been asleep.

There is a lot to be done about this during the present life because this ordinary state of consciousness which goes on in spite of the physical body being apparently dead interferes with the vision of the Causal level. And if we could get rid of all that and could be silent at will as in Meditation we would, all of us, have a much better chance of getting that. And that's mentioned in many writings, in other systems, for instance, Vilhelm, in the *Mathnawi* you'll remember the commentary in Book 6 – a commentary on the Prophet saying, 'Die before ye die. O Friend, die to self before bodily death if thou desirest life. So by dying even Iblis (the Moslem Satan) attained Heaven.' 'Die before ye die' and Meditation is a way of 'Dying' before one dies physically.

So the more importance we can attach to it and the more we know what we are doing, the more rewarding Meditation will be.

What do you make the time? Five past eight? (yes) Well, any questions come up that you would like them to take out to India?

Mr. Torikien. Sometimes there is a surge of light and all thoughts seem to disperse and then it seems quite easy to stay in this state. Would you call this a state of consciousness?

Dr. R. Oh yes, and the characteristic which appears most often in people's accounts of either the mystical experience or the moments of awakening or the passage through death is the appearance of a *Being of Light* – definitely a Being and definitely made of Light – who then puts in front of them the whole of their past life with the unspoken question, 'Were you able to love as I am loving you? Show me what you did with your life.' And a few people are then conducted occasionally, far away from the earth altogether, right into space where they see a 'city of Light', and that city of Light comes into many descriptions of Cosmic Consciousness. So, Light, Torikien, is a very important thing and oddly enough, you (though physically blind) have a special chance of seeing the spiritual Light, being deprived of physical light.

Dr. Cox. Could we ask about the different attitudes people have to their lives? Some people regard their lives as a sort of education.

Dr. R. Yes, I think this is an important question. Some people regard their life as their own to risk for nothing, just to gamble it away motor racing or any other way. Some people try to hold on to it with usually disastrous consequences. Some people even go to doctors. (laughter) It's important – the attitude to one's life!

Lady A. Could we come back to Mr. Caiger-Smith's question which is somehow at the very root of Meditation? Mr. Howitt said at the Meditation Meeting when he was on the platform with you that he thought there were three sorts of people: some people who sat to meditate

and went straight to sleep, others who sat to meditate and attracted thoughts from everywhere far and wide. I'm surely one of those! (laughter) And it does waste time. I think what you said about giving the whole of your attention at the very beginning – Bobby used to hold to that too – is very important.

Dr. R. Do you try not to attract thoughts at other times?

Lady A. Probably not. I find it's very difficult not to be full of bright ideas during the half-hour (laughter).

Dr. R. Terribly difficult. One regards Meditation often as a chance to *acquire* something whereas it is a chance to give up. We think it is a chance to acquire bright ideas. If we could put ourselves in the hands of the Being of Light Who knows everything, we wouldn't have to invent bright ideas of our own!

Mrs. Roles. (repeat) Mrs. Roles is reminding us of one of the first questions you asked the Maharishi about where do bright ideas come from, and he said, 'They come when you want them.'

Dr. R. 'Not in the bath,' he said. But mine do come very often in the bath! (laughter).

Miss Scrutton. Before Lord Allan died he seemed to have a strong feeling about 'I am the Atman' but we always feel we have to try to get to the Atman, but he had much more the feeling you've described tonight about 'I am the Atman' and is this the Jiva facing the right way and could we ask His Holiness something about it?

Dr. R. Oh yes, let's ask His Holiness again about it. It is, in fact, an individual matter. A very great man – Shri Ramakrishna – said: 'I do not like this expression 'I am God'. I *like* God, just as I like sugar, but I don't go about saying 'I *am* sugar'. It's a matter of how each individual feels and usually with us the Shankaracharya speaks about our being the son of the Highest and the Atman is like the prodigal son as compared with the Param-Atman. They are of the same substance, they really are the same, only it's how you feel yourself.

Lady A. Didn't the Shankaracharya say, 'The Atman sits in the lap of the Param-Atman' ?

Dr. R. Yes, in the soul (the Antahkarana) of each person. And the Param-Atman has this inner relation with each person through the Atman, the closest relation that exists in the world; whereas in the outer creation the big Consciousness presides over all these vast worlds that we see and study scientifically, but it's the same Consciousness.

Well, I hope you have a very good holiday. And don't forget to enjoy the Creation as far as it's enjoyable and as far as there is room nowadays on the beaches to enjoy it! Don't forget to enjoy because this Joy is a God-like quality and shouldn't be despised.

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