

13 November 1979

## MEDITATION MEETING

On the platform. Dr. Roles; Michael Fleming (M.W.F.); Elizabeth Fenwick (E.F.)

Dr. Roles. Lady Allan's mother being very ill, she can't come up this week, so Mrs. Fenwick is very kindly going to take her place because the meeting is going to depend rather on the questions she asked the Shankaracharya which voices what a lot of us here feel. And she got a very good answer! So she is going to let us have her question and answer after a bit.

M.W.F. There are one or two announcements. We wanted you to know that the current Initiations are going very very well and the people who are coming seem to be very well prepared; and so their sponsors get a very good mark! And please will they get another good mark by keeping it up! (laughter)

Another thing which is pertinent is that it is difficult to see everybody's face from here. For the record we do like to know who makes an observation or asks a question, so would you try to remember to say your name when you speak.

Dr. R. It is recorded, you see, and the fame is yours forever after! (laughter)

M.W.F. About the next Meditation Meeting which is scheduled for 11th December which is quite a difficult day...

Dr. R. There will most certainly be a meeting but whether I shall be there or not, I can't promise, because it is the Oxford and Cambridge match (laughter) and let me add quickly that the traffic in the Richmond and Twickenham area is very thick – my reason for perhaps being late! Otherwise you'd have to wait until 8th January. Would you like a show of hands? Would you like to wait now I've let the cat out of the bag? Would you put your hand up if you want a meeting on December 11th? Carried! (laughter)

M.W.F. Another thing has happened which doesn't happen very often. There are some written questions and we don't know who handed them in; but it's quite nice not to have them too anonymous!

Dr. R. It's more interesting if we know something of the person.

M.W.F. (reading)

Answering a question about dreams last August, you said that in them one can experience the Self direct and that sometimes one can experience the Atman direct if one wakes suddenly from deep sleep straight into full awakening. What should one do or what special practice should one undertake to bring it about that one should wake suddenly from deep sleep in such a manner that no extraneous thoughts enter one's mind before one fully awakens?

Dr. R. You can't do anything special to bring that about. It's a bonus which comes from the number of moments during the day which you prolong – moments of remembering yourSelf, the Atman, Who you really are. If you have several emotional periods like that then

you may quite well be woken up by the Atman at night and He may tell you something unforgettable. So it's a bonus. If you start trying to prepare for it, you'll get insomnia and nothing more! (laughter)

M.W.F. (reading)

There is a possibility of remaining conscious after one has fallen asleep, but how is it achieved?

Dr. R. No; the Atman is always there and always conscious. You, the Jiva, the ordinary person, needs the sleep. You have a hard working day; you go to bed in order to go to sleep; and don't do anything which could keep you awake. One of the first very sure things His Holiness told me when we first began to have audiences was that a fully Realized man, directly his head hits the pillow, goes deeply asleep; he doesn't remember any dreams; he is not bothered with anything; and he wakes up fully refreshed four hours later and fit for whatever he wants to study during the night and for the next day's work. He said don't expect the ordinary person to do with just four hours' sleep. You need some deep sleep and some Rapid Eye Movement sleep, 'REM sleep' it's called, Dr. Fenwick, isn't it? (Yes) Light sleep which lets off a lot of tensed up energy. So don't try to *do* anything which is going to interfere with your sleep at night.

M.W.F. (reading)

One fleeting glimpse of the Being of Light and Love and Wisdom instils longing for one's whole life that one should find Him again; and one knows too, for certain, that another more real and perfect world exists; the curtain between seems to be drawn and lifted, not by oneself but by some other factor. Discounting the cloud of one's imperfections, is the connection re-established by being out of one's body; or is it also that once the body material has been refined to a certain point, it no longer casts its shadow between our consciousness and that other world?

Dr. R. The first part of the question is beautifully worded and couldn't possibly be put better and I don't want to add to it or spoil it in any way. I quite frankly say, 'I don't know' to the second part of the question but it seems quite right. You find out – because it's different for everybody!

M.W.F. (reading)

There can be a contradiction between the idea, 'Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven' and the idea or desire to escape from rebirth. Is it not the purpose of Man that through accomplishing His Will, the world should be saved or liberated or refined and lifted? And, if so, does this not mean that man must accept rebirth and continue to be reborn in earth even after he has reached enlightenment until such time as all other men, animals, plants, minerals and metals are also delivered from evil?

Dr. R. A most interesting question to which one can't give a definitive answer, but the idea is that it may take you many births to get to the point where you are able to hear and do God's Will. Having got to that point, you are given a choice: do you return to the life you have led and lead it better (as would an actor returned to a given production of a play, play it better) or do you escape from the chain of rebirth? But this is quite a long way ahead of us, so I don't

think we need worry too much! As I say, it differs for everybody whether they live precisely the same life again or whether they have a variant or whether some deviation occurs. Mr. Ouspensky used to say, 'The beginning is always the same; and the moment of death is always the same.'

There was his famous true story of a sailor on the Black Sea whose ship collided with another ship in a storm and this sailor happened to be on the bowsprit. He dropped off on to the surviving ship while all the people on his ship were drowned. While he was patting himself on the back and everybody congratulating him, they arrived in port and absent-mindedly he stepped down between the ship and the quay and died! So we don't congratulate ourselves on narrow escapes too soon!

Now, we'd like to hear Mrs. Fenwick reading this question she asked.

E.F. This what I asked H.H.:

Although I have been taught that we should not expect results from the meditation, I still find it disheartening, especially after H.H.'s suggestion that there are first, second and third class meditators and failures, that there is so seldom any evidence of success to spur me on to further effort. I know that I can't ask for any promise of success, but it would be so encouraging to have H.H.'s reassurance that the effort was worth continuing.

And H.H. then asked me:

What made you feel that failure is in store for you?

And I said, 'because I think one is always looking for *change*. One's life changes, sometimes it's easier and sometimes more difficult. So it's difficult to know whether any change in oneself is due to this or to meditation.'

And H.H.'s answer was this:

Discontentment is not necessarily bad, but disheartenment cannot be recommended! That is certainly unnecessary! Discontentment is a note of consciousness. It indicates that something has been achieved and something has yet to be achieved. It's not a degradation, it's not a failure; it's a symbol of demarcation of the change to keep the effort going.

There are three levels of our being. One is the being itself, the essential part, the emotional part. And then there is the intellectual part and third is the physical or the 'action' part. We mostly come across the actions. There are a number of actions which are necessary because they are part of our nature. We have to perform so many actions whether we like them or not – getting up every day, going to sleep every day, cleaning our body and taking food. All these are natural activities. They have to be performed.

(Record, 30 August 1979)

Dr. R. Just let's stop there. You've followed it all so far? It's very much what we all observe and most of us, I think, follow our actions, don't we, as he is saying. Anything you want to ask about that first bit? Or shall she go on?

I think they want you to go on.

E.F. (continues reading from H.H.'s answer)

But if one is careful, instead of speaking in an uncouth manner one can learn to speak in a better way. One can learn to eat in a better way, dress in a better way, work better.

That much is possible. Every action that you perform becomes artistic. It's no longer what we usually call 'uncultured action'; it is cultured action.

And then there are other accidental things which happen in life which one has to cope with. Some are not very helpful such as sickness. Nobody likes being ill. So you have to take precautions; find a cure, whatever is necessary. This is not completely accidental because such happenings may be related to Prarabdha. Certain things are destined for this particular life and we have to go through a pattern of things that are unavoidable – disease and other such things may be part of this. So we have to try to get over this with the best knowledge and taking the best precautions we can.

As for the development of those two states – the emotional and intellectual – there is no ruler to measure it. But it initiates all changes in the physical realm and in most cases all our actions are governed by these two levels and the growth of these two is a very gradual process. If one cares about these two levels, then one will see that the action level or the material physical level is taken care of. Meditation simply offers improvement on these two subtle and Casual levels. But although it has been said that the consciousness is available to everyone, it is equally true that we have a body and this body is capable of holding a certain measure of consciousness.

After having bathed in the Ganges, people take a pot and fill it with Ganges water to bring back to their home so they can use the pure water for ceremonial or everyday work. Whether the quantity of Ganges water is small or large makes no difference, the purity, the auspiciousness of the water is the same. Even if one has only a small measure, why should one be unhappy? We ought to accept whatever we can hold by the nature of our body. Perhaps there may be some other occasion when one can have a larger measure of consciousness, but perhaps not.

Dr. R. Thank you very much. I don't know if you and Peter have talked about that and whether you are prepared to answer any questions? About either your question or the answer? And what it has lead to?

E.F. I'll try.

Mr. Melidis. Can you tell us what Prarabdha is?

E.F. I couldn't! (laughter)

Dr. R. It is this: the idea of rebirth brings with it the piling up of debts in each successive life. There are debts which have already been paid in part; Prarabdha is that debt which is the principal debt which must be paid up in this present life resulting from earlier lives. Debts have to be paid up and a lot of the things we go through are the Prarabdha which we have built up in previous lives. I mean, film stars get married six times and have to pay for it all in life after life! God Himself can't prevent it! (laughter) But remember the *important thing is not to be piling up fresh debts this time* and that's why we try to remember ourSelves during the day. Carry on – more questions!

Mr. Bullough. It seems to be telling us to be like the man under the Jacaranda tree. (M.W.F. Was it a Jacaranda tree?)

Dr. R. No, it was a Tamarind tree. (to E.F.) Do you remember that story? (No, I don't...)

It's important to realise that the Tamarind tree is quite different from the ordinary tamarisks which grow on a number of beaches in the western world. They are a very valuable wood in India, have pleasing flowers and fruit and its shade is a favourite place for a holy man to sit and meditate. The story of Mr. Bullough is referring to – what particular aspect is it?

Mr. B. He was willing to wait for as many years as there were leaves on the tree until there was a meeting with the Param-Atman.

Dr. R. Yes, this strange figure Narada happened to be doing his rounds. He is the man who informs the Absolute of the progress of his disciples – the faithful. And he got into conversation with this Mahatma who asked him to take a message to the Absolute. And when the answer came back in a few weeks' time when he was on his rounds again, Narada didn't want to tell the Mahatma; he said it would depress him very much if he was given the answer. The answer was that 'as many leaves as there on this tamarind tree – they are very small leaves, thousands and millions of them – that would be the number of years before you will meet Me face to face.' The Holy Man (much to Narada's surprise) went into ecstasy, into Samadhi, and began to dance with joy. Narada said, 'Did you hear what I said? You realise the implications?' And he said, '*Any message from the Absolute is good enough for me*', and started dancing again. And at that moment, the Absolute himself descended and Narada said, 'Sir, but you have put me in the wrong! (laughter) You have given me a message: you said you wouldn't come for millions of years, and within two minutes you suddenly appear!' But the Absolute said, 'Well, I stated the ordinary law of human evolution, but for somebody special there is *never* any delay!'

That, I think, is apropos – not to think of the past, not to dread the future and the long time it's going to take, but to seize the opportunity of the moment to remember that you *are* the Atman who is on the closest terms with the Absolute. Remember *Who you are*. We forget Who we are and this is the most important thing in human life. (to Dr. Fenwick) Anything that you and Elizabeth have since discussed?

P.F. The idea of each action becoming artistic appealed to me very much.

Dr. R. I think that's one of the wonderful parts of that answer... That everything could be done better. Everything could be done more economically, more gracefully. You've only got to see Indian women walking in their saris to see how beautifully they move, how artistic they look! For there is nothing we do in course of a day that couldn't be done more artistically.

Dr Cox. It reminds me very much of my boy who disliked cricket. He had one lesson a week at which he tried very hard, but couldn't get himself to do the right things. He was very depressed and dispirited and we had to cheer him up, saying that this was a momentary situation. He went the next week and came back very full of enthusiasm indeed because he found that his actions had suddenly become right.

Dr. R. What are you, yourself, going to learn from that?

Dr C. I think it's quite right to say that in this intellectual-emotional part, is this watching. If the watching is there, it sometimes doesn't get it right; but with patience, the actions will come right later on, quite unexpectedly.

Dr. R. Yes, as you know, we have a number of different mechanisms and sources of energy and the body is so arranged that one or other can take over and deal with any given situation. But there is in fact *much more choice than we think as to the department which takes over and performs what you have to do*. You experience that in the Movements? If, as you say, it is done emotionally with conviction and a sense of art, it's quite different from the ordinary mechanical action. So there is a lot to discover.

Dr Cox. Could I ask another question about life as a whole? I remember when I was very young that there was this awful business of being lost in the dark. One knew that you had to wait and in waiting, you got... (was repeated as 'things begin to take shape'.)

Dr. R. Yes, fine. But I don't want to be taken too far away from what the Shankaracharya has just said, Michael. That's really why I'm being a bit hesitant about going into too much detail.

How goes the time? There's plenty of time for questions if...

Mrs. S. Beckwith. Does the understanding of having incurred a debt do anything toward the repayment of the debt?

Dr. R. (to Mrs. Fenwick) What do you think about that?

E.F. I think it does. I think one of the lessons I learnt when I first heard the answer, my immediate reaction was perhaps to sit back with you a sigh of relief and say, 'Oh well, I've only got a very small pot!' But of course it's not like that because it's the purity of water in the pot that matters, and keeping the water pure and working on this is probably what he meant us to see, as part of the repayment.

Dr. R. Yes. It's the purity of one's intent which matters, for love incurs no debt and will easily cancel out previous debts. Purity from ego; purity from selfish doubts and all the other things which we introduce which need to be cleared out.

Anything about meditation? This is a meditation meeting...

Roddy Skeaping. Dr Roles, on the question of meditation eliminating impurities, could you say something about how in sitting down to meditate we can clear this water in the pot so that we don't waste time so to speak waiting for Grace?

Dr. R. Just being firm with yourself to drop at once *anything* which takes your attention away from the mantra, and anything which makes you forget why you are meditating, namely to make contact with your true Self. So you have to be very firm and not to make excuses and so get into the way of dropping *immediately* any of those thoughts which are going to lead you away, and especially in the first five minutes. So often when we sit to meditate our minds drift and our trains of thoughts build up and the mood changes so we no longer know quite why we're sitting there. We have to start very firmly and keep to the mantra rhythm as long as it's there and when it goes, keep the stillness.

Now I think we should have some stillness. After that I want to read something interesting – a lovely story which you have never heard before.

MEDITATION for 10 minutes

*Everything depends on our getting to know who we really are.* There would be no difficulty in meditation which would be coming home to our Father in Heaven. Nothing would stop us if we understood and reminded ourselves often enough of the fact that in each of us is this 'I', the Atman, which is a replica in miniature of the Self of the Universe. There have been many attempts to understand, to express to other people, this non-dualism without implying that one thought oneself God or any of the ordinary things one calls I. One has to find out who the Atman really is; and this conversation which was at the series of audiences the week before our party arrived was held with Maurice Pickering, in the course of which he asked:

M.W.F. (reading)

M.E.P. I understand the concept of Advaita (Non-Dualism) is fundamental. Could we persuade His Holiness to say more about Advaita?

S. His Holiness has developed the idea of Advaita. He says that the philosophy of Advaita is Cosmos and ourselves – what we call 'Param-Atman, Jiv-Atman' – they are actually in substance One. In principle they are One, but in practice they are two. In practice whatever we get, we get from Cosmos because we are constructed of the same elements. That's the basic principle of Advaita philosophy. Do you get it?

M.E.P. Yes. It's very much a question of how to approach it. One questioner says, 'Reason tells me that I am not separate from the Cosmos, but experience gives a modest small answer.'

S. That is true. His Holiness has just said there is. By reason we know, but in practice we have to act as if there were two. Otherwise there would be no dealings in the actual life. It would be difficult to have any dealings, *but whatever we may be doing we should remember that we are one.* That's the instruction. The knowledge is there but while we are dealing in life, we do not remember. We forget what we are, so we need to practise 'being what we are'. That is, we will be able to acquire, as it were, that knowledge. At present that knowledge remains knowledge only, but we can introduce it into our dealings by remembering that fact.

(Record, 22 August 1979)

Dr. R. And to illustrate that, His Holiness tells a story out of the Tradition of Krishna which is particularly full of stories. That's its main vehicle of communication – all those stories, myths and parables surrounding Krishna and this one is to explain the relation between Atman and the Param-Atman of the Universe – the individual and the universal – this is the way it was put in their literature.

The Lord Krishna, the embodiment of the Param-Atman had a friend called Sudama (who stands for the Atman in this story). It was a childhood friendship and when they were small, at one time Sudama used to grab and eat Krishna's share of the food in a stealthy sort of way. Consequently they became separated; and Sudama grew up in great poverty, being deprived of all worldly affluence, success and support. His wife, therefore, began to goad him and kept persuading him to look up his erstwhile friend Krishna. The wife in this story, H.H. explains, is the Buddhi, the Reason. And Reason keeps goading him to go and look up his childhood friend Krishna who was living as a King in a great palace. At last, because of her constant nagging, Sudama set out to go to Krishna. But by then he was so poor and

weak that he couldn't make it and fell half conscious on the way. Lord Krishna had him rescued and conveyed to the gates of the palace. But he was in such a wretched condition and in such beggarly clothes that the guards in front of the palace prevented him from going in. However he did manage to get past them and get into the palace and then the staff of the palace kept interfering with his progress at every turn. The staff of the palace and the guards represent the various functions in the psychological nature of man – all different parts of the human endowment which initially prevent one from Self-realization. But finally when Sudama did get into the presence and Krishna gave him an audience, he treated his former friend with great honour as his equal and the two became one and they were very happy ever after. Seeing the way their Master honoured the visitor, the servants also started to revere the stranger, whom until then they had impeded. So at a given point, all your various functions which have been upsetting you – your feelings, your conflicting desires, your thoughts, the negative side of your character – all begin to turn in the right direction because they are lightened and made beautiful by the association with the Atman.

This parable, (said H.H.) was the story of the Param-Atman and Jiva-Atman – the small weak individual who cannot get to the Universal without the help of the Param-Atman himself. The 'guards' are other elements of the soul (the Antahkarana) namely the Buddhi, Manas, Ahankar, Chitta (the reflection of Consciousness). All these impede him. But when Sudama returned to his wife and family and his life affairs, everything prospered. He finds everything nicely arranged for him as one whom the King of the country has honoured. So the world too gets to know of the meeting of the Jiva-Atman and the Param-Atman.

Maurice then said:

So we have in this story both the knowledge and the devotion (the two sides of man). The knowledge is the way of wisdom of the wife – Buddhi – and devotion comes from the childhood friendship of long standing.

H.H.'s reply was:

Yes, you have there the best essence of the story. The product of meeting is knowledge and the actual meaning is devotion. Atman becomes what he calls your 'deva-ista' – the desire of your heart. And it is that desire that can replace all other desires and be the last desire at death.

(*ibid*)

Dr. R. Any questions about that? If you live with that (we'll have copies made) you'll find that there are depths in that story which explain many problems we have. For instance, the story can be taken on different scales. It can be taken, as I've said, in terms of the last desire of a man at death which determines his next life. And H.H. goes on to say that it's a question of the Gunas and that those in whom Rajas and Tamas predominate at the time of death, *don't remember* that they have ever lived before. But if a man so arranged matters that he is full of Sattva before and during death, he will remember everything and he will then have the choice we mentioned, as to whether he returns to life or escapes from the wheel of rebirth.

Q. In each moment of the day there can be death and rebirth?



Dr. R. Yes, exactly, that's the practical thing. You don't wait until you are going to die. You start today and you realise that there is this possibility at every change of consciousness or change of job whereby the Sudama can come towards Krishna. This is what these moments, which we have to find and prolong, really mean. Then also there is the 24-hour period, the same thing in relation to the waking state during the day when the left hemisphere is dominant and the night when the right – the inward-looking hemisphere – has its own way. It has many meanings, this story.

I do think we would find meditation much easier if we connected it with something very important – our heart's desire, something which we desired in life after life and never got fully.

It's nearly quarter past eight. (pause)

Peter Kindersley. After reading the notes of the last Meditation Meeting, I wondered how one could make the Mantra more precious. It so easily becomes repetitive; and talking about the thought one had in one's mind at the end of one's life, I didn't have that feeling about the Mantra. Could you say something about this.

Dr. R. What do you think about that, you and Dr Fenwick? Anything to say?

P.F. It seems rather to depend on the purity of heart of the meditator.

Dr. R. Yes, chiefly; and I think it depends, Kindersley, on a number of things. It depends on how much time you give to remembering that this is the most important thing in life; to how much time you spend carrying out the instructions given; to how pure your meditation is; so if you really were to do what you are told with the whole of your heart, that would bring success very, very quickly – much more quickly than we think because the time scale is so different. Mankind may have to wait thousands and millions of years of evolution; but it can all happen in a minute for individuals belonging to a great Tradition.

H.H. once said that Shri Ramana Maharshi (the chief saint in India in Mr. Ouspensky's time) meditated for fourteen years on the question, 'Who am I?' As soon as he was on the right track, he achieved his aim in a minute.

So that's why we spend a lot of time trying to get it right! Any last questions?

Mr. Torikien. (a blind man, present with Alsatian guide-dog) Dr Roles, it doesn't seem that it is the effort we put into it. What happens is that all of a sudden there is a conscious step one gets into and this feeling creates this desire to want it more. (repeat) Mr. Torikien says that the effort one makes to get this state doesn't really feel like an effort. All of a sudden one comes into a more conscious feeling when it becomes natural and the feeling of preciousness grows all by itself.

Dr. R. You're absolutely right, Torikien. The false self – the person ('devil in epitome') that we create – puts up this mirage that it looks very difficult; makes a great difficulty out of what is a natural and simple thing. And you don't want to listen to all that about the difficulty and so on. Isn't that what you feel?

Mr. T. Yes, indeed. When I was turning this evening, it happened just like that. It was a marvellous feeling; and how easy it was! This is how it makes it more precious to one – the mantra or the feeling itself; and it strengthens itself.

Dr. R. Yes; and the original written question asked how does this happen at night when you wake suddenly from deep sleep into the clear. That results from the same simplicity. Inasmuch as you have been taking each half-hour simply and any moment of remembrance quite simply, without thoughts complicating it. So at the most simple time of all when there is nothing at all between the Jiva and the Atman in deep sleep, the voice of Atman is sometimes heard loud and clear, if he wants to tell you something.

Well, one can get too full... I think that's enough, but I would recommend that you do take the trouble to read much more often some of these stories and some of the sayings of His Holiness which make such a difference to the *knowledge* that the Realized man can make a change for each of us.

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