

13 February 1979

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING

Lord Allan. There are no announcements except that the next Meditation Meeting will be on March 13th.

Dr. Roles. Those who put in for a copy of the Brochure about Mr. Ouspensky may like to hear the latest letter from Yale.

A. This is from the Associate Librarian at Yale and he says:

Dear Dr. Roles,

I am replying for Mr. Rogers (the Chief Librarian) who is on sabbatical leave this term. The P.D.O. Brochure is now being reprinted and we have reserved 200 copies for you. As soon as they have been received from the printer, we will ship them to you and will mail the invoice at the same time. The original suggested price of \$4.00 still stands. We have planned for an overrun in this printing so we will be able to fill other requests you may receive. Please let me know if you wish to order any more.

Thank you for sending us a copy of *The Bridge* No. 3. We are pleased to be able to add it to our P.D.O. collection.

This brings best wishes from all of us here at the Yale University Library.

Dr. R. You may have heard that our old friends the Mathesons have both died. Macleod Matheson a fortnight ago, and Enid Matheson's death announced this morning. So 'he first deceased; she for a moment tried to live without him, liked it not and died' as the old epitaph put it. Anyone who ever went to Lyne Place will remember how well they kept it going.

This, being a Meditation Meeting, and there having been a surprising amount of interest in the Initiation Ceremony, I thought we might have a little talk about it today. Anybody can head me off on to something different if they want, but it might refresh those people who were initiated nineteen years ago in January and February and also refresh and instruct those who have started meditating fairly recently. It's really rather instructive as well as being picturesque.

We must remember that the idea of a Mantra, of repeating the name of God, is very, very ancient, in many parts of the world. There is evidence that it was carried on in Egypt before Indians were invented! And indeed the Mantra we have been asked to use (as an experiment to see if there is an all-purpose Mantra which everybody could use) is not an Indian word.

The ceremony, however, is a very Indian institution and is clothed in Hindu mythology. You remember the main lines of it: we ask the Tradition to take the candidate under their wing and once at least in the course of an Initiation session we mention some of the great people in the past as guides in the future for the new Meditators. It starts with the name *Narayana*, back in pre-history, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, the preserver, the second person of the Hindu trinity, so the claim is that the original Mantra and guidance reached by him to mankind by divine inspiration. And there were many distinguished people in the long line following that – Vyasa who wrote the *Bhagavad Gita*; Govinda the teacher of the first Shankara; and the first Shri Shankara himself who 25 centuries ago set up the 4 permanent seats of learning, north, south, east and west in India, that have kept the

Meditation clean and the Tradition pure all that time, although India has been invaded and conquered several times. Through all the politics and wars and so on, they have kept this Tradition very pure so that we can be quite certain that the present Shankaracharya is saying the same thing as the original one.

In asking the Tradition to take the aspirant into their house, you provide them, a usual custom in India, with all that they need; water to drink, clean linen, spices – the only spice available for us is rice and that does it in the West; all the other things betel and all the other things named in the Ceremony; flowers, incense, light – the light of the candle, fruit, water for his bath, and camphor which burns without residue symbolising Consciousness. Having done that, he takes the flowers which the candidate has brought and offers them back to the present Guru and his predecessor and then says the incantation, which brings the Ceremony to an end. This is really very instructive and interesting. We asked that question and I'm going to get Lord Allan to say what the present Shankaracharya's comment was.

A. (reading):

Q. People in the West ask what significance these words can have *for them*? 'Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara, Guru Sakshat Param-Brahma?'

S. With the first impulse, the Absolute (Purush or Lord), starts the creation, and Maya enters – her other names being Prakriti, Nature, the Phenomenal or illusory world.

(based on Record, 27 October 1965)

(These two are described in the ancient 'Riddle of Narada' thus: 'There is a woman who assumes many forms: there is One who is the husband of the woman'. This we are assured has nothing to do with human sex differences; for 'Maya' includes all those men and women who remain under her sway, whereas the 'Purush' includes those Realized people who are liberated from it.)

Dr. R. Is that clear? That's an important point because I've had rather rough treatment from the Shankaracharya for presuming as a male to suggest that I was 'Purush' and women were changeable and assuming many forms. (laughter) This idea is right out!

A. (reading):

S. As Creation starts, out of the union of those two come three aspects (Gunas) of the Purush – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (Maheshwara); and the three aspects of Maya – the complementary feminine aspects whose names are Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati. On the universal scale, Brahma and Saraswati start the creation: they have all the knowledge and power needed to give the impulse, and to regulate the laws governing the initial stages.

Dr. R. At the same time Brahma is never worshipped in India. He represents fire – the fireball at the start of Creation – and you can't embrace or worship fire, for it's too changeable and hot. So in most of the temples in India, the worship is to Vishnu or Shiva.

A. (reading):

S. Vishnu and Lakshmi preserve, protect and nourish its life, ensuring continuation. While Shiva and Parvati keep pruning and removing all that interferes with its

evolution; and at the closing of this World Cycle, bring it back into the same Equilibrium, which is nothing but the undivided Absolute (Purush). These are the 6 combinations of the 3 Gunas created by the Absolute who is beyond them all.

Dr. R. And that's where the words of the Shankaracharya which, you will see, resemble very closely the words that our System has, given by Mr. Ouspensky, about three primary combinations of three forces and the three secondary ones manifested in the galaxy making six combinations of three forces repeated with greater and greater complication on every scale. The origin is clearly the same – the original idea.

Well then, coming back to the Initiation, will you read?

A. (reading)

S. For the individual at the Initiation the 3 Primary Gunas are related to the Guru thus:

Just as Brahma is responsible for giving the initial impulse of Creation, so the Guru is responsible for creating the impulse of the Mantra in the Antahkarana – (psyche) – of the candidate. Then in the form of Vishnu the same Guru looks after its progress and sees that the Mantra continues its work. And in the aspect of Shiva he cleanses and Purifies by dissolving all the impurities within the aspirant so that its evolution can progress naturally.

And because the Guru through the Meditation takes the aspirant through all the manifest nature or Prakriti to the Divine Self that lies beyond it, the final sentence of the incantation says:

'Guru sakshat Param-Brahma, tas mai shri guruve namah.'

So to the Guru as Param-Brahma (the permanent Reality that lies beyond the changing Prakriti) we bring these offerings to his lotus feet – the lotus being the radiant flower that remains above the water without being made wet by it. That quality was described by Shri Krishna in chapter 14 of the *Bhagavad Gita* v.v.19–20:

19. As soon as a man understands that it is only the Gunas, that act and perceives that which lies beyond, he attains to my Divine Nature.

20. And when the soul transcends the Gunas which are the cause of all the changes experienced in physical existence, then, freed from birth and death, from old age and illness, he derives the nectar of immortality.

(Record, 27 October 1965)

Mr. Hodge. That seems to explain why, during the Meditation Ceremony, there is so much silence – all the Prophets mentioned have become Realized.

Dr. R. Yes. It's rather nice to know that this Meditation system belongs to a long and secure Tradition. It is supposed to give the candidate confidence because it will enter his Causal level which is where the Initiation ceremony is directed and where the Mantra is supposed to start and continue and get nourished – in the Causal level and not just in the physical level. It heartens him probably to know of the great men who have used this in the past.

There is a point which is of great importance every time one meditates which is the relation between Purush and Prakriti, between 'Mother Nature which assumes many forms' and the directing mind and Consciousness of the Creator himself, one changing all the time,

unreal, illusory, not what it appears to be; the other the only Real and permanent entity in the Universe. It's very important to each person to distinguish in himself between these two. We are constantly mixing them up. There is a story which is told to illustrate this. I'll try and tell it in the exact words.

There was a famous 16th century poet, Tulsi Das, about the time of our Shakespeare, who wrote the current form of the Ramayana epic which is so gay and full of fun and full of stories that it's the main spiritual message that the crowds want to listen to.

(to Lady Allan) You have a copy of it, haven't you? You haven't read it at the top of your hill?

Lady A. It was the first time the *Ramayana* appeared in Hindi as opposed to Sanskrit, I think.

Dr. R. Yes. So it was in the language of the people.

Well, one day he was going travelling in Western India and there was a very famous woman called Mira (pronounced 'Meera') who was the perfect devotee. She wanted to see him as he was so revered a poet and she wrote to him to this effect. But Tulsi Das replied to this request by saying that he didn't want to see women.

When Mira heard this, she sent a second message. 'Up to now, I understood there was only one God of Creation – one Purush. Now I am much intrigued to hear there is another Lord of Creation and this one refuses to see a lady when she asks him!'

Stung by this message, Tulsi Das sent for Mira and she got her audience after all. She asked this question: 'Who exactly is the Purush and who is the Prakriti called the Nari – the woman or female form?' Realising that Mira was well-informed, Tulsi Das was very careful to explain that all those beings in the universe who were ensnared by Prakriti or Maya and are bound to the laws of form and space and time are called Nari – the 'woman'. Anyone who has liberated himself – any man or woman who has liberated themselves and are not held prisoner any longer by Prakriti – is the Purush. If he is not ensnared by his own nature or by the nature abounding in the universe so that he is free, then he is fully Realized and with him there is Purush alone.

(Record, 28 January 1970)

Have you any idea how this feels in oneself? What *is* one's nature? Is one aware of the Lord of this nature and the differences between them. This is very important. I would like you to give attention to this. A stony silence? We are all Purushas! (laughter)

Dr. Cox. As a child one seemed to think that adults were so silly. They seemed to get up to such silly things and believe such silly things and do such silly things – they seemed to contradict themselves almost every day. This was a great puzzle because what did they think was so important?

Dr. R. I quite agree, because the only times in the course of our lives that we recognise that there is a Lord and Master of this Creation is in early childhood (before the speech centres and the dominant hemisphere reduce everything to the lowest common factor) and at the moment of death when everybody goes through this Realization – there is a lot of evidence now about that. And why go through all the rest of one's life forgetting the only valuable

thing one ever knew? Partly education, partly imitation of grown-ups – crazy it is! I agree with you, Doctor, and in your work you must see quite a lot of the silliness of today's outlook and the consequences!

Lady Allan. Dr. Roles, could you say in what relation one should regard the conversation about... or thinking about Purush and Prakriti and thinking of the Atman? Is it just another description of everything that is not Atman – the Prakriti?

Dr. R. It is really the same thing used to explain different facets of it. Purush *is* the Atman in being in command of the individual – the small world of the individual. He is also the Param-Atman when he is in command of all the individuals and the whole Universe. So that Purush is a neat word combining the Param-Atman and the Atman in one, you see. (Yes) So that you distinguish between what is always there and never changes and is not subject to time and place and that is Purush. With what is changing all the time – changeable body, changeable psychology, changeable intentions, everything that keeps changing and assuming many forms. That's how I see it but you probably could put it better.

Lady A. That's very helpful because that means that the many sides of one's nature that are part of one's role in life as a human being are Prakriti – they are not necessarily negative or bad, but they are part of evolution and all that goes on. Is that how one... ?

Dr. R. Well, yes. There are two levels of Prakriti. There is Para Prakriti which is beyond change, beyond the Gunas, beyond the three forces and the triads and is unmanifested. That is Para Prakriti and outside of that, there is Apra Prakriti. There is the immanent Mother Nature which is changing and in the middle of which we live. So we distinguish between the Consciousness that lies beyond and the world we live in ordinarily. It is very possible and easy to slip from one to the other – to slip from the changing world to the unchanging world, to know the trick of it. And that is what you are supposed to do during a half hour.

Mrs. Simpson. Does it say, in the same way as Mr. Ouspensky said, that with purification one escapes laws?

Dr. R. Yes it does; but the ancient Eastern system is very nebulous, very difficult to get hold of; but the parts of the System Mr. Ouspensky taught which remain good to this day and have always been true introduce a lovely precision into everything. And this idea of escape from successive numbers of laws is a much more precise way of speaking about Liberation to my mind.

But if you would like to return to the Western idiom now, you're welcome. But shall we first of all meditate and try and drop off the woman who assumes many forms? (laughter)

MEDITATION

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