

28 April 1980

READING 1
SUMMER TERM

There have been requests to hear again some of the quotations given at the April Meditation Meeting so perhaps we should start the term that way for two weeks until you make known what you particularly want to study.

From Meditation Meeting 8th April 1980

On the Platform: Dr. Roles, Michael Fleming (M.F.) and Roy Jacob (R.J.)

PART 1

Owing to our symmetrical structure the human mind commonly alternates between *movement* occasioned by sensory impressions from the outside world, and the *movement* of the dream-world within, which goes on underneath all the time. This movement also occasions most of the difficulties we have in meditation, and yet people sometimes say that they seem to be afraid of the *stillness* which is the chief aim of meditation and of much of the Shankaracharya's teaching and method!

(to M.F.) Would you please read a question put by Lord Allan some time ago and the answer it had:

Q. What part of one is it that seems frightened of the stillness?

S. The moving mind, Manas. Our mind as a whole is the go-between of our outer and inner worlds, and has to interpret both those worlds throughout. But education has for so long been associated with the outer world that the educated mind has quite forgotten the existence – let alone the language – of the inner world. So when, in meditation, it is confronted with the inner world, it is unsure of itself; can't interpret the data it receives; can't express what it experiences; and so becomes frightened.

The moving mind looks for happiness or satisfaction through getting and experiencing external impressions and sensations. But these do not suffice to produce any lasting contentment, for as soon as this mind gets one thing it immediately rushes after something else. The mind when *still* finds happiness in everything and this is achieved by meditation; so meditation is to be encouraged everywhere by making public that part of the True Knowledge which shows how things really are.

There followed some discussion:

Q. It is the outer verbal aspect that seems to entrap us, and is this due to over-use of language?

Dr. R. Yes; when we catch our minds mechanically repeating verbal forms we should know that this is the outward-looking dominant hemisphere wasting energy and opportunities for consciousness.

M.F. When at some moment an experience suddenly becomes full of significance, what is the source of that?

Dr. R. It sounds as if the two sides of the mind are coming together (Yes.)

In H.H's definition a 'flash of understanding' is said to come when the two halves work together for a few moments in harmony; so that suddenly you perceive an inner meaning to what seemed before just an empty external event.

R.J. (interpreting a lengthy description) I think what she is trying to say is that it did not matter about her outside life as long as her inner life was calm. Is that what you meant? She says 'Yes' and adds that when her inner life felt balanced then her outer life did not worry her nearly so much. Dr. R. agreed.

(Pause)

M.F. continues reading from the Shankaracharya's quotation:

S. Unless the mental discipline to produce the stillness in meditation becomes natural, so that we can *turn within* with no difficulty at all, we must pay attention to regulating the body – to keep it under control. We know that the hand of a sleeping man moves if a mosquito bites him. This is part of the natural function of the moving mind, which should be trained sufficiently so as to allow its different parts to perform their appropriate actions while keeping others still.

(He mentions also sitting *still* in meditation with symmetrical posture and a straight back.)

S. (continues) If this is not done in the early stages then even if some people have a little success in meditation they stand in danger of reverting back and ceasing to get complete stillness and lasting benefit.

(M.F. reading) Then you said:

R. I know now, in a clear moment, that if I allow my moving mind a free ride, it will cloud up again very quickly.

S. One should never allow the Manas to go free, since it is a very important link in our machinery. So it must always be under the control of the pure Buddhi (nearer to the Atman.) Then the body also becomes easily trained so it can, after a period of discipline, be made relaxed and free of unnecessary movement.

Meditation is a discipline to enable us first of all to control the restless, moving mind. It is a small discipline – the smallest one can think of; it needs doing only twice a day.

On a quite different occasion, the Shankaracharya told a story (of which we should now remind ourselves) to show that:

S. Even this small discipline shouldn't be taken as true although it is essential for success. The truth is that one really is the Atman; though in one's ignorance one doesn't know this secret. Once you realize your real Self with love, then mere discipline becomes useless. You may take a thorn to get another thorn out of your foot but, having done so, you throw both thorns away. Otherwise there is a risk that the means should be taken for the aim; meditation is the means but the aim is the stillness (in which one could hear the 'guiding voice').

In India, the laundry man or dhobi has to get the dirty linen to the river in the morning where it is washed and then dried on the rocks in the sun; to be taken back for distribution in the evening. Very often the transport is done with donkeys, and this particular dhobi man had a fleet of donkeys. One day he fell ill so he asked his

son to see to the job. The son loaded the donkeys up; but when he tried to get them to move, they wouldn't budge an inch.

So he went back to his father and explained. His father said, 'Oh, I forgot to tell you that the only way to manage the donkeys is to go through the motions of tying up their feet in the evening, so they will keep still and go to sleep; and then in the morning I go through the motions of untying them so they will walk. This deceit is necessary because otherwise the donkeys won't obey – it never occurs to them that they could naturally do it themselves. So the boy went back and pretended to untie their feet and the donkeys at once stepped out toward the river.

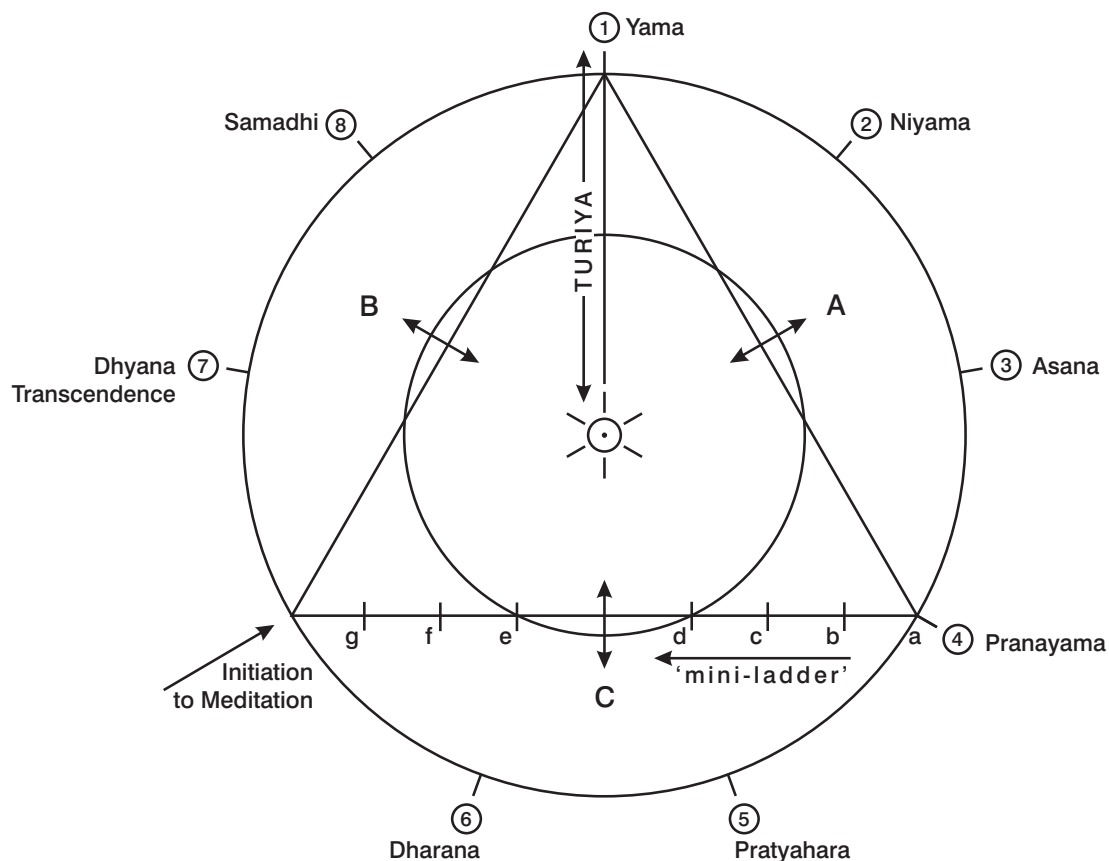
So, leaving the question as to how long we are going to remain like this in the future, let us now – being at least *good* donkeys – meditate!

MEDITATION – 10 minutes

PART 2: CONSCIOUSNESS – A BRIDGE

[Prepare to show on the screen the simple version of the Symbol shown at the Meditation Meeting on 11th March (80/11 p.65)]

Our 'Consciousness' is like the light which I switch on to show a pure white screen. Until something appears on the screen, we are not directly conscious of *anything* – the consciousness is 'pure'. As P. D. Ouspensky said: 'Consciousness can exist without functions and functions without consciousness. That must be clearly understood because there is still great confusion between consciousness, memory, and thinking.



With Symbol (previous page) on Screen.

We see the two sides of the triangle – (A) the outside world, and (B) the inner world; while (C) can be seen as the screen of consciousness which unites them. No work on realization can proceed without some degree of consciousness during our daytime state.

Q. The base-line of that diagram, could we call that the mind?

Dr. R. Yes, it is what we ordinarily call our 'mind' – here (pointing to forehead) but only if the mind is illuminated and completely *still* whether we are in action or not. Any valid 'system or discipline' from a Conscious source describes a way of using this reflected consciousness as a *bridge* between the two worlds, the outer and the inner as in this quotation (from M.E.P.)

Once the king has constructed a bridge across the broad stream, then even a tiny ant might cross without difficulty.

I will now ask R.J. to read this description by the Shankaracharya of this Meditation (the simplest of all disciplines) as a Bridge (1974 record) between points (a) and (g) in the diagram.

S. The practice of meditation by itself is not an isolated act. It is a journey from the start of the mantra to the end of all agitation. This is a bridge over which one needs to throw all one's belongings of desires and activities, while walking from one end to the other.

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Note. From the Symbol we see that the mantra is introduced at Point 6 and works *both ways*. Its most important job is to purify the inner life leading to the Source (Param-Atman) at (9); but its effects are to be noticed in the improvement in our consciousness 'C' during the active life.

Reading continues:

The Japa, the act of repetition of a mantra, has little effect by itself. Although a suitable mantra repeated and sounded would naturally produce its Sattvic effect, yet this is not enough. The practice of meditation demands relinquishing all mental and physical activity. At one end of the bridge is the start of an activity; and at the other end is the stillness of immobility.

The practice of meditation between these two points is to pick up the mantra; embark on the activity of repetition only; and with the help of the mantra, to allow everything – even the mantra – to disappear *without doing anything extra*.

The rhythm of activity will settle down and come to complete stillness – not of a void, but a fullness, which is the presence of the Self.

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