

8 July 1980

GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING**COLET HOUSE**

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan and Mr. Carl Evans (C.E.) New York

Lady A. The next Meditation Meeting will be on August 12th and there will also be one on September 9th.

Would turners please note that owing to initiations and checking tomorrow, there will not be room for a turning practice so it has had to be cancelled. Please get the news around to other turners especially the people that you know come on Wednesday evening.

Lady A. During the holidays we are having a week and 2 weekends of work in the house for maintenance and decorating. It will be between September 14th and 21st, weekday evenings and during the day on Saturdays and Sundays. We should be glad of as much help as possible, and if anyone wants an opportunity of repaying something of what they have gained by coming here, this is one way of doing it. There are lists outside on the landing giving dates and time.

Dr. R. It was very successful and, we believe, much enjoyed last time.

Lady A. Also during the holidays, we shall be having a weekly maintenance party on Thursday evenings, starting at 7.30 p.m. This is for anyone who can come – it doesn't have to be every week, and you don't have to belong to one of the regular working parties – it is for anyone who can lend a hand. The house has to be kept clean and in order, and we do it ourselves – we don't employ anyone for this – so please come if you can. There is no need to say when you are coming – just turn up and it will be much appreciated.

Dr. R. There will be a chance for the people wanting to do Movements to Music in the autumn – would anybody wanting to join the class please give their name to the office.

Lady A. There is another way people could help and that is with arranging flowers in the house. We have asked at one of the other meetings; but perhaps people feel they have either got to come very regularly or would have to buy the flowers or have to be a professional flower arranger. None of those things are necessary, but we would like people who could come and help with the flowers occasionally, particularly before Initiations; and it is another way in which some repayment could be made for what has been received. One or two people have been doing it for a very long time so it would be very nice to have some fresh help – if again they would let the office know.

I want to welcome here Mr. & Mrs. Evans from New York who have been asked by Mr. Rabeneck there to come here for ten days or so on a kind of refresher course for mutual benefit. Carl is now empowered to initiate and is gradually taking over the initiation side in New York. He has monthly meetings of those who are keen on meditation but who feel they could be getting more than they are, which include us! So we thought it would be interesting if we compared notes. (to C.E.) I don't know if you feel like saying anything, Carl, about what you do at these monthly meetings? And what comes out of them, such as you've been telling me.

C.E. I could be persuaded to say a few words. Meditation in New York has got into some difficulty. People who have been meditating for a long time – some feel they have not received the proper results and were reluctant to come forward and say so and ask for help. They thought that seniority brought some sort of meditational benefit to them, which, in fact, it did not. Sensing this by the general mood of the group, I have been asking them to come forward and asking them to get help. I've been asking them to start from where they are today and to give up any ideas of where they think that they should be and let the meditation do the work that it was designed to do. (Dr. R: Everyone hearing all right?) Another aspect of the Meditation which has been neglected in New York is the love for it. Very often meditation seems to become just something that one does and forgets just why. So in New York we have been trying to inspire people to remember why they came to the Meditation in the first place and what they felt either at the initiation or in the first few weeks after initiation, after it started to sink in. This has produced some favourable results but error creeps in over a long period of time, inattention creeps in over a long period time; and it may take some time to correct all these things. But it all begins with a new resolve to go as deeply as possible and to get help if difficulty is encountered. Because help is there, both coming from the Shankaracharya, from Dr. Roles, from the individual group leaders, from all the people who wish you well. It is not being true to yourself if you do not try to avail yourself of this help.

Dr. R. I may say we are very grateful to the Evanses because when we first went over to lecture in New York in 1971, they and a group of which they were part with Lillian Amis brought many people with them to these lectures. And then they followed it up by starting meditation themselves and joining the group. And then when we went over for the second lot of lectures, they again filled the room, with friends, and so he knows what he is talking about when he says that you try and recall the way you started – the feeling of the original contact at the Initiation. It's a refresher.

Anything you want to say now? Do you regard London as very dissimilar from New York in relation to the meditation? Or is what he is saying part of our experience? As long as a few people are brave and speak up at the beginning, the rest follow.

Mr. Hodge. This is part of my experience here, Dr. Roles, because I get a lot from the meditation, but at the beginning I wondered if I did love it.

Mr. A.W-P. (rpt) Mr. Wenham-Prosser wants to know how it is possible to measure what you are getting from the meditation.

Dr. R. Now this was the thing we concocted between us! We hoped somebody would ask that. (laughter) Good for you, Wenham-Prosser, I think you're psychic! (laughter)

C.E. That should be one of the benefits of meditation! (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes. But it's the 'turning' in his case! And the Dervish music. (to C.E.) Well you mentioned several things – I mentioned several things – when we were talking about this. What would you say would be some of the noteworthy benefits – ways of telling – whether you are profiting to some extent from meditation?

C.E. One of the easiest ways to seeing it, is that people don't punch you around as much, which means that you might be a little easier to live with! Another way would be that you feel a lightness of spirit under criticism, whereas before you might have been very defensive. An objectivity towards yourself and towards other people that is kindly and not forced. And in general an increase in one's tolerance of the very many irritations that one finds in life today. These are some of the signs.

Dr. R. Then I suppose there is an access of *energy*. Everything we want to do has its own kind of energy needed before you can do it. To remember oneSelf needs a special kind of energy. To paint an original picture or to play at a concert – they all need their own special kind of energy. And the meditation is a way of feeding energy into the big power-house which can then supply all these different functions with their own kind of energy. So whatever you want, the Shankaracharya says, you'd have the energy for it if you meditated sincerely and simply. He differs slightly from the Maharishi. Maharishi used to act and say, 'Whatever you want, (even being clever at getting other people's money) well, meditate' – that sort of thing. But the Shankaracharya says that meditation is for people who want something along a spiritual line to some extent! (laughter)

C.E. One could donate the money! (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes. Then there are other things. In the old bad days when we learnt our Western System, we were told that everybody in the West lived in an atmosphere of fear and lies. We think that's rather a gloomy point of view but nevertheless we do have an awful lot of fears. And meditation does do away with those fears. We no longer worry quite so much about the future and we certainly oughtn't to have any regrets about the past. Shankaracharya says that what happened five minutes ago is over and done with. You can't recapture it so drop the burden. Burdens of past and future are dropped from the mind if you meditate sincerely. Anything else occur to you, Maureen?

Lady A. When you said about the past and the future, one thing that came to me very clearly through experience was that if you can hang on to the present moment, which was so necessary for me for quite a time, then the past comes to the present moment with great joy and also the future. It doesn't mean you have to give them up totally but you bring them to the present moment and the whole thing is all right.

Dr. R. That reminds me of another thing. You have all filled in forms and on the forms, one of the questions is. *What do you want?* It has often been very difficult for anybody to say what they want – day after day what you will always return to. In fact when we were giving children of 10 the meditation, they used to write all sorts of things – I want a large family or I want a pony, or something like that. There is a story about this – it's very very important to set your sights high and to want something really worthwhile. Otherwise you get disappointed.

There was a story in the epic Ramayana about a boatman who refused to take the King – King Rama – across the Sharayu river which was in his own kingdom. This created a great stir and there has been a lot of mythology about this passage in the Ramayana. So that boatman became quite famous.

A little while ago, (said H.H.) a saint was wanting to cross the same river. And remembering this story, he said to the boatman at the end of the journey, 'Now ask me for anything you want and you will be given it.' And the boatman said mechanically, 'All I want is the price of my next meal.' And so the saint laughed and thought, 'Well really he could ask for anything he wanted and it would be given him; but still, how could he know what that might be if all he wants is his next meal.'

Meditation opens up areas and vistas where you begin to know what you want and what you've always wanted.

Have any of you found this? How do you react to that? It does open up that and if you continue to revive that want, do you not find that you are nearer getting it?

Mrs. Evans. I would like to find I was nearer getting it, Dr. Roles.

Dr. R. Perhaps it's too far away, too big a want. Can you think of a want on the way to it? (yes) That's the way to get it. To think of something a little nearer that is within your grasp and then the next.

Mr. Ouspensky used to describe the next lamp post – don't think further ahead than that – as if we were little dogs or something (laughter) Anybody add to this list?

Mr. Torikian. It seems to be a gradual process, Dr. Roles, like dipping the cloth into the dye (rpt) you go a little deeper each time. What was wanted before is attained and becomes something natural; then there is the next step which is gradually attained also. One doesn't know where one is going to end.

Dr. R. And very often along the same line, Torikian. The wants seem to align themselves in a certain direction and that is the direction to pursue.

Now I would like very much to meditate and we have been sent quite independently from two different sources a poem which is felt to be a nice one to have before our meditation this afternoon. (to C.E.) Would you like to read it?

C.E. It's called 'Celtic Benediction'

Deep peace of the
Running Wave to you
Deep peace of the
Flowing Air to you
Deep peace of the
Quiet Earth to you
Deep peace of the
Shining Stars to you
Deep peace of the
Son of Peace to you

MEDITATION

Dr. R. Meditation during the half hour is a matter of giving up. Giving up all movement of the mind and the body, even of the emotion of the causal level... all the inner and outer movement. I'd like you to hear again this answer to a question the head of the School of Meditation in London (which we helped to start) asked at one of his audiences.

Lady Allan. In 1974, Mr. Whiting said:

At my last visit you spoke of stillness and rest through meditation and you said, 'Your job is to provide stillness and make them give up all features of their separate egos.' Would you say more?

The Shankaracharya then spoke of three levels of stillness – physical, mental, and spiritual. Everyone knows that after a full day's work, one needs a few hours of deep and dreamless sleep at night. Although people know this, not everyone knows the art of physical rest. Stillness at the subtle level comes from a state of non-desire between the completion of one set of actions, the satisfaction of one desire, and the start of the next one. The stillness at the spiritual or causal level is available when all activities of the physical and subtle body, the desires, the thinking processes and even the feelings are all stilled.

Dr. R. The causal level is especially important in meditation. It's why we have the initiation ceremony which is meant to be introducing the candidate to the causal level when he is given the mantra. If it goes straight in there at once then he has success many times afterwards.

Lady A (continues reading)

All the departments of body and mind which on the causal level are the ultimate initiators of the activity of individuals come to peace and quiet. When complete satisfaction with everything and every situation is achieved and there is no hankering after any further need, then one gets the stillness of the spiritual realm. In that peace the Atman appears as the sole witness in its luminous glory and enjoys the great stillness of the whole universe as one single unit where there is no play of physical, mental or even emotional movement. This could be described as complete surrender or complete faith in the Will of the Creator. One simply accepts everything without any rejection or opposition. These are the three types or levels of stillness which the school should provide for its members, according to the varying needs of individuals.

Dr. R. This would be a measure of what you're seeking to find out from your groups, wouldn't it?

C.E. Dr. Roles, what would you say would be rest on the physical level? What do you think the Shankaracharya means by saying we don't know the secret of physical rest?

Dr. R. This is a matter of everyday evidence. Even in relation to physical sleep at night only, consider how many people today take sleeping pills. How many even in this room could claim that they regularly get four hours of unaided deep sleep directly their heads hit the pillow and 3 or 4 hours of light 'sleep with dreams'? Any doctor today would admit (if he were honest) that both the profession and the public have lost the secret.

And 'physical rest' includes more than that – it means physical relaxation between jobs during the day, and after work. For the secret is that *to be physically relaxed demands that one first achieves peace of mind*. The physical depends on the subtle level – hence all the physical tension and much of the illness one sees around.

Mr. P Smith. Dr. Roles, I find myself noticing the state of the mantra and I remember that at a previous meeting you spoke about the mantra slowing down. It's very subtle – I'm not sure whether I'm following the mantra or pushing it. In other words, making it slow down if I notice that it's being monotonous.

Dr. R. In fact you are noticing too much! The question is: What are you noticing it all *with*? What part of the mind? It's *that* part of the mind that needs to rest. The part that keeps noticing and commenting: 'I'm doing well', or 'I'm doing badly', or 'This isn't a good moment to meditate.' This eternal inner noise which is a greater hindrance to meditation than outer noises.

Mr. P.S. You also speak about following the rhythm of the mantra. Does this mean you are not following the mantra as a word?

Dr. R. (to C.E.) You can answer that, can't you? We don't cling on to the mantra as a word for very long, do we? It ceases to be a word.

C.E. It will go where it goes and you must allow it to go where it goes; give it complete consent. Then it will take you away from the thought of itself and take you into stillness.

Dr. R. All that you speak of, Philip, is personal psychology and mental analysis. You must give it up for the half hours to be a success.

Lady A. Early on, I asked the Shankaracharya about this 'troublesome friend' (the commentator) that I found I had all the time. He said that the troublesome friend is useful up to a certain point and that it tells you simply whether you are meditating or not; and apart from that, you should let it go.

Dr. R. I see Dr. David Connell here from Connecticut. Have you anything to say about it?

Dr. D.C. No, I'm just enjoying listening at this moment. (laughter)

Miss Scrutton. Dr. Roles, the other day you used a very good phrase about 'getting off at the next station' and letting the meditation go on. Isn't that how it has to be in order to do what Mr. Evans has just said?

Dr. R. That's how it seems to me. How about you? Don't you agree that you set the stage; you sit with a straight back in a symmetrical position and you start repeating the Mantra. Then you leave it alone, as you were saying – getting off at the station.

Miss Scrutton. If it slows down, it slows down.

Dr. R. Yes, and if it goes faster, allow it to go very fast. If it wants to disappear, let it go. Don't push it along or cling on to it. The Mantra is one of the names of the Absolute, of the Atman, and it is carefully selected in our case – the one we are asked to use mainly – because it has three aspects or Gunas contained in it – three sounds in one sound. These three aspects in themselves will affect the nature of everybody and you leave it do its work, realizing that it connects you with all other meditators using this mantra round the world. You've got all that force behind you just as we felt now in this room and a lot of this lovely Sattvic energy here which often makes it possible to meditate here when you can't meditate at home.

Any other things you want to say?

C.E. There was something from a musician in the New York group who heard the sound very deeply and it moved him in a very emotional way. He said that to him, he could feel the sound echoing through the ages from the beginning of meditation; and he felt not only

connected with all meditators alive today but all those in the past.

Dr. R. Which, of course, is what the Initiation Ceremony is making us do – to connect with a long line of leading meditators in the non-dualistic Advaita tradition right back to pre-history – to Narayan, another name for God (Vishnu).

Lady A. Dr. Roles, I don't mean to be facetious, but could you say something about the contrast to that which is when you are letting it go, but in fact you're doing what I tell myself is doing one's shopping while thinking one is meditating. This I hope is many other people's experience, not just mine! I find that so much time is wasted by what I call 'doing my shopping'.

Dr. R. Yes, this is a problem. You are not supposed to interfere; but you are not supposed to be doing anything else during a half hour! And with all these thoughts that are wasting precious time, one has to keep a weather eye open, don't you think, for that? Say to yourself quite sharply, 'STOP!' If you do that, it really will stop.

C.E. You suggested the other day that the word 'Silence' – in other words if thoughts are crowding in during the course of ordinary life (not particularly in meditation) that you say to yourself 'Silence', giving the intellectual part of you the chance to repeat this word, instead of going on about whatever business it wants to run on about. Perhaps if meditation becomes very difficult, you could pause for a moment, give yourself that instruction and begin again very gently, always gently, never with force. The meditation will not respond to force. So don't be angry at yourself for not meditating. Don't be impatient with yourself. Just approach all this with love.

Dr. R. Let's ask some more questions – people who don't ordinarily talk, why not talk now? Ask some questions of this cosmopolitan international board of meditation directors!

Dr. Dale Beckett. Dr. Roles, sometimes at the beginning of my meditation I recognize a silent wordless pulse. Is it better to continue to attend to that pulse or to overlay it with the sound of the mantra?

Dr. R. (to C.E.) Would you say yes or no?

C.E. Wouldn't that really depend on whether thoughts were coming in? If there were no thoughts coming in and if you felt the activity winding down, then there is no reason not to stay with it. If thoughts then come in, perhaps it would be better to go back to the mantra and begin again.

Dr. R. That's the answer, Dale, but remember to keep the mantra close by you during a half hour. Don't get too far away from it. Have it there to grab if you find that thoughts really are entering and taking your attention away. I agree with Carl, if it is very peaceful already, why interfere?

Q. It sometimes seems to me that the mantra is there always and bobs up during the day at unexpected moments particularly at moments of difficulty. Could you say something about that?

Dr. R. I entirely agree. Especially in times of difficulty it may be there all the time and I once said this to His Holiness and remarked that some of our people woke up with it still going

in the morning; and he said it is wonderful that people so far away from the source of Meditation in the West should be having this experience. It is true about many people. It's also true about people who have car accidents (something like that) and wake up after being entirely unconscious for days or even weeks and find the mantra going. I found it there after a three or four-hour operation – the mantra was going! We don't have to be very good at it to get that experience. (laughter) It's one of the surprising benefits of which there are many that one can't foresee.

How are we going for time? It's now, I think, eight minutes past eight.

One is asked about knowledge. We were discussing this. Does one have to know a lot about checking the meditation; about teaching the meditation; about other things connected with Self-Realization? This is a question they ask also in New York? (yes)

(to C.E.) There is a certain amount of basic knowledge which can be a help, but for H.H. the True Knowledge means experiencing the 'presence of the Atman in its luminous glory' – how did he put it? 'In that peace when one has no further hankering after any need, then one gets the stillness of the spiritual realm. In that peace the Atman appears as the sole witness in its luminous glory.' It is that presence that suddenly answers any questions that you may have after the meditation. You have no activity of the mind during the half hour, but afterwards if you have a question that is deeply with you, it's that presence which will answer it. That is the source of True Knowledge and isn't that what the checker or the instructor in meditation needs?

C.E. Oh yes.

Dr. R. It gives more success than a set of rules. In general, checkers are supposed to be so close to their friend who is meditating that they know if this friend is troubled, is not getting very much out of it, and will be able to find out what this friend is not *giving up*. Because if a person is troubled and feels that the meditation is not working, it is because they are hanging on to something – not giving up some aspect of their personality. In last week's paper was this passage from the Shankaracharya which deals with the fact that all we have got to give up are the features of our narrow separate ego.

Lady A. Mr. Whiting said:

It seems that the absence of the dualism of regarding oneself as subject or object relates very much to being still in spite of the noisy market.

And the Shankaracharya said:

A man may steal and be punished as a thief; or perform a good deed and be commended. But the *power of consciousness, which remains only a witness*, is neither the thief nor the good man. Thus all claims of being the doer of actions or the enjoyer of objects relate only to ego – Ahankar. When True Knowledge dawns then the distinction between the witness and the doer actually takes place and one understands that one is really the witness and not the doer or the enjoyer. This witness *is* the stillness. One's claims of doing and enjoying make the din of the market, the realm of movement and of commerce. As Lord Krishna says in the Gita, 'only the fool whose mind is deluded by egoism considers himself to be the doer'. As long as one is claiming to be doing and achieving, one *becomes* the movement instead

of the stillness.

If one has a coat and hangs it in the wardrobe, the inanimate coat can't go to anybody's body. It must remain where it is. But when you put it on, it goes everywhere with you. The same with the ego when it claims to be the owner of mind, body and consciousness; and then it goes with one everywhere like one's coat. No sooner is it disclaimed however than it goes back to the place where it belongs, namely the Prakriti – one's innermost nature. Then the Atman, having no tie or attachment, becomes the witness discarding all claims of doer and enjoyer, like a coat.

Dr. R. So that's the thing to do, to resolve as you go into a half hour's meditation, to hang your coat in the cupboard! (laughter) Have you been managing to keep it going (to Ken Little from upper New York State) in the U.S.A?

K.L. Not as well as I would have liked.

Dr. R. Did you get to New York as you intended?

K.L. Unfortunately, no. And I would like to talk to Mr. Evans about it.

Dr. R. Well there's a chap who has kept meditating without going to New York (laughter) Anyway it's nice to see you here again.

Dr. R. It's quarter past eight and we had better stop – we get spiritual indigestion if we try to be too high for too long! So if we could just have what Mr. Ouspensky used to say: 'Last question! If it was the end of the world what would somebody ask?' And then we can go home and eat supper.

Mr. P.S. How do we hang the ego in the cupboard?

Dr. R. Yes, a thousand-dollar question! You have to get to want this, or something related, deeply and continually, unlike the boatman. If you *really* want something you will hang it in the cupboard whatever gets in the way. There are no rules for hanging personalities in cupboards! (laughter)

C.E. Perhaps also the desire to hang it in the cupboard is a prayer and a prayer directed inward will be answered, maybe not immediately but it will be answered.

Dr. R. You're right; and then Atman will come in answer to a prayer if it is seen that you are genuinely doing something – as our mothers used to tell us as children: 'God helps those who help themselves' which H.H. says is: 'Fortunately true'. If it is seen that you are genuinely trying, you will get help from within. That's why these things come in times of difficulty. And that's why we have difficulties. It's all part of the game of Creation! If everything was always rosy and sweet and easy, we would never do anything, would we? except *eat!* Which personally I am going to do right now! (laughter)

All right, well there will be a meeting in August on the 12th and on September 9th.

Lady A. And there's the week of work from 14th to 21st September and any Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. you would like to come; and any people who would like to help with flowers!

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