

11 August 1981

**GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING**

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Lady Allan and Mr. M. W. Fleming

Lady A. The next Meditation Meeting will be on Tuesday, 8th September. There were two very good Work-Ins last weekend with 38 people on Saturday and 28 on Sunday, to whom very many thanks for all the work that was accomplished. There will be another...

Dr. R. Well, let's say thank you first! (laughter) for last weekend.

Lady A. There will be another of those on September 12th and 13th, so if anyone would like to come on one or both of those days, would they please put their name down on the lists outside.

We now have further supplies of the cassette recordings of the Thanksgiving Service for Mrs. Roles, so would those who have asked to have one, please go to the office after this meeting to collect them.

Dr. R. We can always order more if other people want them. People in Mexico and around may be asking. I find it tremendously helpful for my meditation.

Lady A. Finally there is a reminder that there are work parties on Thursday evenings at 7.30 during the holidays. Anyone is welcome; no need to put your name down; just come when you can.

M.W.F. It would be very helpful to know whether anybody has anything they very badly want to ask or to raise any particular aspect of meditation. Any topic that seems particularly helpful in making one want to meditate more. Hesitate to ask about difficulties! (laughter)

Dr. R. We've been learning so much how meditation helps in critical moments. I want to put a little bit of that to you this afternoon because I think it applies to many more people than one supposes. There are two rather connected troubles which assail one and cause the meditation to get monotonous and difficult, without one suspecting that it's happening – it happens underground. One of these we discussed quite early on – 1969 – with H.H.

Lady A. Dr. Roles asked:

When one sits to meditate, one first of all puts aside the coarse physical world. With love for the Atman in one's heart and attention on the Mantra one goes through more and more deep layers of the subtle world and the object of meditation is to penetrate to the Causal world. Would that be so?

And His Holiness replied:

There are four natural states of consciousness in human life. Three states are very common – sleeping, dreaming, and awaking states – awaking not in the real sense. Besides those there are also the unconscious state and the final one is Samadhi leading occasionally to Turiya.

Dr. R. They are not quite the same; let's keep to Samadhi.

His Holiness continued:

The two last are very similar wherein there is no knowledge of any experience. In unconscious state, there is no connection between the experiencer and the physical world.

Dr. R. You can think of it as a trance state. Some people used to get into trances and burn their fingers on cigarettes and walk in their sleep – a state of hypnosis or automatism. We don't do that now! (laughter)

Lady A. (reading)

Whereas in Samadhi the experiencer deliberately cuts off the experience even though connected and only enjoys the Self. In meditation one could experience any of these states. One may sit still with closed eyes and yet make movement inwardly in subtle body; or think about one's affairs; or go into a blank mind; or even go to sleep and dream. But one can also by proper meditation achieve the state of Samadhi. In this state there could never be any experience at all except the Self. If one experiences love for the Self or attending to the Mantra, he hasn't reached that stage. All such experiences are certainly better than others, but not the best.

(Record, 19 September 1968)

Dr. R. Let's pause there. We've all got to die sometime and the process of dying is quite often (if it's in the natural sort of way) a long, tedious and often distressful time, when meditation could be a lifesaver, as we've just discovered. One dies from above downwards. The personality dies first and layer after layer of recently developed nervous system dies in succession. And it's only when all *that* has died and one is apparently incommunicado that one gets to the stage of being in Samadhi – the ordinary meditator doesn't experience it often enough and only experiences it incompletely perhaps for two or three minutes in the course of a half-hour.

But one notices how a person, when they suddenly face up to the fact that they are going to die quite soon, goes through a dark tunnel where they can't find themselves; they can't do what ordinarily seems to work; and in this state a lot of distressful things happen. For instance, one's breathing is very apt to get terribly difficult and one is apt to need oxygen on the slightest exertion and be in considerable distress all round. Faced with that, one discouraged any attempts at meditation by my wife and started to pronounce the Mantra, sometimes out loud and sometimes just in a whisper, at the same time stroking her arm in rhythm and pronouncing it long and slow. And it wasn't long before we discovered that this had a marvellous effect on the breathing. Whenever the breathing speeded up, she got agitated; but if one did this, then the breathing settled and got quite peaceful and almost imperceptible for quite long periods. And then if it started up again, one would do this again. Latterly we never left her night or day and so we were able to keep this going. And it wasn't again long before she didn't need any more oxygen at all. She didn't have any attacks of shortness of breath. We got some really good nursing help which was part of the secret and so she didn't have to do anything for herself. But she then began to go into and remain in Samadhi and one began to know that oneself and share it. Then she began to find herself (the 'Being of Light') and look very happy indeed, and start caring more for other people than for the needs of her own body.

About that time she began to make extraordinary discoveries. She wasn't one for the mystical life ordinarily! And as she got more and more physically unconscious, she would

prattle away in a scarcely audible voice, telling us all about these discoveries which were very hard to hear, very hard to pick up. When she found that we weren't hearing, she became very quiet and spoke only single sentences. Every now and then she would suddenly open her eyes and say a sentence like 'Why am I still here?' 'I'm longing to go home.' 'Tell them it's OK for everybody at the end.' Things like that.

Now I think that this could be used not only for dying people – old people or very ill people – much more than it is. We're asking our psychiatrists to look into the matter. But also about oneself to understand how important it is not to get fussed by changes in body rhythms like breathing which are after all due to the Gunas. They occasion a whole lot of psychology which starts up and one should just wash out all that personal psychology and simply detach oneself and try to relax and go to sleep. 'Give up one's suffering' in fact, but it does benefit one greatly if people around you can help in that way.

Now this breathing variation we were told about at initiation, weren't we? We were told to take two or three deep breaths at the start. We were told not to notice our breathing, that the breathing would become imperceptible – breathing and heartbeat. And yet I suspect that for quite a lot of us over the years, especially the people who have meditated a lot, that the Mantra rhythm often goes on underground; and (without our knowing it) connects with the breathing. And this, I think, is a common cause of difficulty with the meditation. It has connected itself with the breathing and goes on mechanically like that. Now has anybody found that? Can anybody confirm this? There's no disgrace in it at all!

For instance, has the meditation sometimes become monotonous? That's a sure sign that it is connected with some rhythm that is going on mechanically. I don't know whether you are all too proud to have experienced these things... (a chorus of voices!)

A. Brundson. Dr. Roles, I have noticed sometimes – I don't know how to describe it – there is a sort of drowning sensation and I've often wondered if this was lack of oxygen actually.

Dr. R. I see what you mean, yes, it is connected with the breathing when it has got to the stage where you are noticing the anoxaemia – the lack of oxygen. Quite right; it has many different characteristics. For instance, at night you perhaps have had dreams about flying. This, Mr. Ouspensky connected with disturbances of breathing at night. There are all sorts of funny dreams one has which are caused by some sort of connection with breathing, digestion, and so on. These rhythms are called Pranas. So what do you do when you're drowning?

A B. If you think more of the meditation and less of the drowning, it seems to go to another state and become very clear. It seems to be a process of detachment.

Dr. R. (laughing) Yes, the first thing is to stop being alarmed about it. You know the cause of it. It is inattention to the Mantra, its rhythm – so you attend to the Mantra and everything is all right.

There was another question...

R Hodge. Dr. Roles, I have noticed this mechanical rhythm that you spoke about, but it usually changes and I can't understand how the change comes about. I'd like to know more about the change.

Dr. R. Right. Now that's a very leading question. I was amazed that you didn't get it in first before

Mrs. Brunsdon! (laughter) Now you have asked and it's a very good one. And this applies to the question you asked (Lady A).

Lady A. Shall I finish yours because mine relates to the end of your answer?

The Shankaracharya said:

In meditation one could experience any of these states. One can sit still with closed eyes and yet make movement inwardly in the subtle body or think about one's affairs or go into a blank mind or even go to sleep and dream. And one can also by proper meditation achieve that state of Samadhi. All such experiences are certainly better than others but not the best. The real meditation does not last for long. One would be fortunate to have two, three or six minutes of real meditation which would be union with the Self. This would be sufficient to give enough energy to perform one's actions with ease and efficiency. If one could get more real meditation, then the result would be still better and the activities of such a person would be very refined and their sphere of influence will be great. Happiness would prevail all round him and the result would be very obvious to all. The whole operation is very much like waiting for a trunk-call for three hours and when it comes, to finish the conversation within three minutes. Although half an hour has been prescribed, one only gets a few minutes of real meditation and they are enough to lead a happy and efficient life.

Dr. R. So don't try too hard for too long, but just rest; and when you get the opportunity, try and drop all thinking processes altogether and get as near complete peace as you can. That's the answer to the first question. Now about Mr. Hodge...

Lady A. Yes. Then I asked:

What His Holiness has said about the duration of peace during a half-hour is very helpful because I think one is often greedy or discontented about this. But in leaving all the distractions of the outer world, one still finds one has a rather troublesome friend who accompanies one almost to the end, commenting all the time on the quality and changes in meditation. How can one leave this friend?

Dr. R. We'll leave that for the moment. This goes with those changes in breathing. I don't know how you describe it but I describe 'this troublesome friend' as a journalist – a newspaper reporter who is going on commenting on my meditation the whole time. This troublesome friend is a commentator. I don't know if you've felt that, Hodge, have you? And that is very mechanical and connects with the breathing. So whenever the commentator gets worked up, the breathing gets worked up; and the two seem to be very connected in human mechanics. Now has anybody noticed either of these? Hands up those who have noticed the commentator. (A whole forest of hands shot up!) To Lady A, so it isn't only you and me!

Now we've been advised not to try to push that commentator out; don't try to turn him out, same as we've been advised not to notice our breathing either. So one mustn't oppose this commentator because he gets stronger with opposition. Then you got some tips from the answer to your question.

Lady A. He said:

There is no escape from this friend, for the questions he raises are essentially reasonable. If one gets a few minutes of proper meditation, that is enough. Even so,

there is no need to stop at that limit but one can work for more of such experiences and finer energy. It's like an examination in which one may pass with 33% marks, but it will be a third class pass. One needs more marks for second and first class and higher still for a distinction. This is a good question for it shows the way for better results but one must take care that this friend doesn't become more important than the meditation.

Dr. R. That's really the thing. What works is to treat him as beneath contempt; laugh at him; call him names; anything you like; and then come away from him altogether. Directly you begin to be worried by him, he gets flattered. He is a manifestation of the devil, you see; and so he likes being paid attention. Just don't notice him and he'll fade out.

Lady A. Yes, he says one may hear him but not be bothered about him.

Dr. R. 'One may hear him but not be bothered about him.' Any problems connected with this? The meditation could be so much more rewarding than it usually is, in our case.

Mrs. Farley. Dr. Roles, it seems that the commentator isn't always there. You dip in and then come out again. What is it that brings you out again?

Dr. R. I'm rather lost as to when 'You're in' and when 'you're out'.

Lady A. I imagine she was referring to being in, being quiet and peaceful, without the commentator, and what brings you out again from the peace. (Yes)

Dr. R. The mere fact that it is only possible for the ordinary person to keep their attention, keep singleminded for a short time, varying in different people. But it is strictly limited. The story of the arrow-maker, you remember, tells one that for certain special purposes you can keep your attention really fully on a job when it's very delicate, very important, for five minutes, even ten minutes. But when it's not very important, it's physically impossible for the average person to keep their attention for that long. So we must recognise this fact, take it into account, don't worry, take a deep breath and start again. But don't keep on beating against the wall because you will simply use your surplus energy up. It's a question of energy.

M.W.F. Dr. Roles, it's very important to understand here something about the Gunas, isn't it? Because one does seem to spend the early part of meditating opposing either Rajas or Tamas, so one thinks.

Dr. R. And this spends energy. (Yes) So one recognises, just as when you are driving a car, that the car is running hot and you've kept your foot on the clutch; or you recognise that it is difficult to start – it's cold and you need more choke. And those are Rajas and Tamas. But when you can just collect yourself and go neither into overdrive or into 'underdrive', you experience something in the middle which very often turns into a feeling of waking up, of renewed energy. And this is a sign of Sattva. It's very much a question of energy.

You can't think of energy in relation to meditation in the same terms as the scientist thinks of energy. They tell us that 'Energy is the capacity to perform work, to move a certain weight through a certain distance' – all that sort of thing. But it's not that kind of definition which is going to help with human psychology, and in particular with meditation. A much more helpful definition is the one by William Blake, the poet: 'Energy is eternal delight'; and undoubtedly when you get a sudden release of energy from the sympathetic nervous system, the emotional

side, you get this feeling of delight, don't you? So you pay no attention to thoughts, get quiet and you will find that nearly always you get this sudden release of energy from the emotional part of one's being.

Lady A. I remember at the time it was so very encouraging, Dr. Roles, to see that he expected you, in each half-hour, only to get two or three minutes of quiet and that the half-hour was in order to get that two or three minutes, not to hope to get the whole half an hour.

Dr. R. But of course he is very anxious that we shouldn't take it that we should only try it for two or three minutes (no) – that's only 33% pass mark!

Lady A. It will take the full half-hour to add up to three minutes of quiet.

Dr. R. Yes. And that's why half an hour...

Lady A. Yes, he said here: 'Although thirty minutes are prescribed only two or three minutes full meditation in the half-hour is enough to pass but one should always work for higher marks.' (laughter)

Dr. R. Are there any other common problems?

Richard Ellis. (Cambridge) Dr. Roles, one of my common problems is to have sufficient desire, like the arrow-maker, to keep my attention – there is a lack of will or a lack of effort – somewhere to keep my mind on the one thing.

Dr. R. Ellis, the arrow-maker is not about meditation. The story of the arrow-maker is about things in ordinary life that need full attention. In ordinary life that need does the job for you, makes you keen to keep attention in order to get the job done. But in meditation you have to supply, as you said, your own incentive to get really quiet, genuinely to meditate and have one-pointed attention. And you do that partly during a half-hour by making sure that *this* half-hour is a special half-hour every time, devoted to the Atman. But also you learn to spend less and less time and energy the *rest of the day* on trivia. So the general quality of a half-hour will improve with the general quality of the day, the day's attention.

Lady A. Dr. Roles, there is a very practical question, something I've experienced very much recently. If you are very tired physically in the second half of the day, it is very tempting to say, 'I am too tired to meditate. I shall go to sleep or do something quite different.' How does one combat that?

Dr. R. I think it is partly due to regarding meditation as something you *have to do* – some arduous duty.

Lady A. Well I don't know, but it was such a surprise to find that I did feel that.

Dr. R. Meditation is at best a tribute to one's own Divine Self – a thank you (Yes) and not a request or an attempt to snatch something for oneself.

Lady A. It was only when one was really physically tired that this came up; otherwise it isn't like that. But when very tired, physically, there was this feeling that one was too tired.

Dr. R. What you have to convince yourself of is that when you are physically tired it is the best time to meditate because there is less Rajas, less of this troublesome companion (Yes) and what you

have been really hoping for is that you would get tired *enough* to be quiet. And now here is your chance (Yes) so it's partly changing your attitude about this tiredness at the end of the day.

M.W.F. Yes, because when Sattva Guna predominates, there isn't any problem at all. One remembers straight away exactly how to be in order to stay in this relationship with whatever part it is that is holding one there.

Dr. R. Yes, that's it. So now I'm tired of talking and this is a chance to meditate.

### MEDITATION

Q. Dr. Roles, I sometimes find myself repeating the Mantra when going to sleep at night and this appears slightly mechanical. I'm not quite sure what to do about it.

Dr. R. If it comes, let it come. It's a bonus. But don't try and continue it. Let it come. Let it go. It sometimes starts up when one is moving around also. You let it come but unless you are sitting in the right circumstances, *don't make any effort* to meditate. It will be quite all right. It won't start anything mechanical if you don't connect your thinking mind with it. All these little problems keep coming and you should ask anybody who is available and the answer may be different for different people. The long and short of it is that there are a lot of stories which explain something which has, until just lately, been inexplicable, namely, the bilateral symmetry on which the whole nature of every mammal, animal is built – the union between two sides. But it must be united.

There is a story which has been told more than once about a pair of seabirds who laid their eggs (on a high rock) which were washed away by the sea. They were incensed at this injustice that the sea should have the nerve to wash away their offspring. So they decided to fill up the sea and they worked all day and every day removing a little seawater in their tiny beaks and dropping it on the beach; and removing a beakful of sand off the beach and dropping it in the sea.

A Realized man happened to pass that way and noticed all these curious things going on, because a lot of other birds imitated them, and said, 'Do you really think that you will, in the course of a lifetime, be able to fill up the sea with this tiny effort?' and the birds said, 'No, not in the course of one lifetime, but we're ready to live again and again and again till we succeed for we're not going to suffer such injustice.' He was impressed by the determination of these two small birds and used his Yogic power and commanded the sea to put the eggs back, which it did.

(Record, 19 November 1970)

Now the birds are mankind; the saint is the Param-Atman in this fairy story; the eggs are man's laudable intentions – man's aims, aspirations. When the Param-Atman sees and is impressed by the earnest endeavours, however small, of human beings, He comes to their assistance, and the world gives up interfering and troubles – the waves of the sea – quieten down.

This pair of sea birds has a psychological meaning as well. The two sea birds are the two hemispheres of each man. *They must work as a pair*. What they have to do is to take something from the outer world and get it into the inner world; and something from the inner world and get it into the outer world. Then the balance is restored and your aspirations return to you with energy to carry them out. This isn't as far-fetched as it sounds, for it is a guide. When we talk

about the two hemispheres, we mustn't divide ourselves into two people. We must always be *one person*, during the day attending to the affairs of the outer world and during the night we are forced into the state of dream and sleep where we attend only to the Atman. Do you think that's coherent?

Lady A. Very wonderful. (laughter) It's very helpful.

Dr. R. There are lots of stories with a *double entendre* like that. You mentioned the one, Mrs. Fleming, of the two painters. So it's worth looking. There are so many aspects of the way man is made that no *one* story suffices.

Well it's nearly quarter past eight now.

Lady A. I think what you said about always thinking of one and working together is very helpful because the whole idea of integration – this word funnily enough came to me this morning and I thought it was a word that everybody appreciates – to be unified or integrated is really a common aim.

Dr. R. But the tendency of scientific thinking today is the opposite. It's analysis, differentiation; the two sides of a character are really differentiation and integration like the Calculus. And they forget to put Humpty Dumpty together again. They are very good at busting Humpty Dumpty up, but they never remember to put him together again! (laughter)

Lady A. At the last Meditation Meeting you reminded us that the purpose of life is happiness and I found that a great help. Somebody wrote and asked me a lot of rather tricky questions about terminology and I'm afraid I used your answer. I said that if worrying about the terminology is necessary for happiness or it leads to happiness, fine; but if not, drop it. (laughter)

Dr. R. Why worry! But do let us realise that the slow quiet breathing is associated with pure emotion which is a very happy feeling. Quick breathing is associated with excitement which leads in the opposite direction, to more and more excitement and nervousness and unhappiness. So one reason for learning this art of stilling the breathing and making it very long and slow is that you bring the emotional centre into play. I think you got to know that, Mrs. Connell, in the course of your ballet career very thoroughly, more than an ordinary layman knows about it. It has to do with all the arts, something like ballet especially and of course opera – singing.

So I think that now we can call it a day. I hope that there will be some little meetings because these things can't be discussed very well at big meetings. During the holiday period we sometimes have them at different local regions and there is a chance. So back and enjoy ourselves. *Adieu*.

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