

10 February 1981

**GENERAL MEDITATION MEETING**

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

M.W.F. As you know we had an introductory talk about Meditation for some people a week ago last Sunday. We are hoping to have initiations on Sunday 1st March and on Wednesday 4th March; we may have to have another one for latecomers. But it would be good if anybody who is interested in coming would give their names to the office this week so that we can make plans for the two actual days. I think it is the business of the sponsors to see how the land lies with those people and anybody else. There is still plenty of time for a talk in the next ten days.

Dr. R. Did everybody hear that? Would you like it repeated?

We want some practical questions to begin with – any difficulties people are finding and the ways they have discovered of dealing with them. So if anybody has anything they have been hoarding up to say, let them speak.

There are some grand questions from the new people who are coming along and I'd like to hear from them, because in a big anonymous room, it's easier sometimes.

Tony Anholt. Dr. Roles, the Shankaracharya has said that it is sometimes inevitable that we will be immersed in either Rajas or Tamas. Can you say anything further about that?

Dr. R. The Game of Life is played with three counters – Rajas all activity, and all three levels, physical, psychological and spiritual must have peace, quiet, silence at times; and yet the really rewarding one is when a third force that you don't ordinarily recognise comes in and feels like a gift from somewhere – not one's usual selfish state – which is this Sattva. Something which is neither activity nor inertia and which has a lovely feeling of waking up. We get through life because we are rewarded by moments of this; nearly everybody is at some time or another, particularly as children. But we need to have more, especially when we have something important to do – like a first night for you.

Lady A. When indexing for you, I came across something the Shankaracharya said: that at the most you could be under the influence of Sattva for two hours out of twenty-four, so you have to have twenty-two hours of something else. (laughter)

Dr. R. Yes; but at the same time even five minutes of an extra concentration of Sattva is very noticeable and can change one's whole day. All these three counters are present the whole time, are present everywhere in everything. It depends on their concentration and the predominance of one or the other. For some things you need peace and quiet; for some things you need force and energy; and for other things you need serenity.

Helen Wright. It's rather like cooking. You have much the same ingredients in both pancakes and soufflés – it all depends on the proportion. (laughter)

Dr. R. I never knew that! (roars of laughter) You can find innumerable examples. You go by the taste, the meaning and the taste of the activity, light and a brake – turning the gas down.

Mr. Weigall. We've got rather used to the idea of Rajas as something pretty awful so it's very good to hear that of course Rajas gives you the energy to do all the things that you wouldn't do otherwise without it.

Dr. R. You do need it quite often. But you do have to switch off. If the Rajas becomes uncontrollable, you get a state of affairs like Northern Ireland or Iran. You need to have it just a little bit under control – not your control, but the control of the Overseer of the Garden.

You heard the story at the last Meditation Meeting about the cripple and the blind man and the Overseer and the Owner. Our whole future depends on having a strong Overseer who remains on the spot and looks after these two. One thing which I don't think was realised and would have made it much easier for you at Dr. Connell's group is that all the characters in that story are present all the time in all of us, in everyone, everywhere in the world. They probably don't know it; don't know that they have the Owner within call; that they have this Overseer. What is different is that one should regard it, as the Shankaracharya says, as an actor sometimes on-stage, sometimes off-stage. They are there always but some of these characters hold the stage one time and then disappear; and then another set of characters turns up on stage. We only notice what is on-stage at a particular time. We don't realise that the characters are changing all the time in us. But the Overseer sees both the active and the passive hemispheres and sees all the functions, if he is awake and doing his right business. This is the idea. So we could have a lot of help from you Tony, about this stage business! (laughter)

Ray Hodge. This Overseer, Dr. Roles, is he the same as the inner voice that speaks to us sometimes?

Dr. R. No. The Overseer is the one that gets you through the day – your chauffeur. He is keeping you informed about the outside world; at the same time he is taking into account what is going on inside. But the voice you speak of – there are many voices, many voices which come from different parts of the organism. What we have to do is listen to the Voice that counts – to distinguish the Voice of the Atman and any servants of the Atman who are faithfully serving Him. We're like a great city, a multitude of different small consciousnesses. And we have to learn who they are. 'Know Thyself'.

Now I just want to come back to something immediately practical about this half-hour. So much depends on recognising that each half-hour should be taken as new and fresh. One shouldn't pay any attention to any previous half-hours at all; but this half-hour *now* is to be devoted to the great Self, the Atman, the Lord; and everything depends on the first five minutes.

This question from Angela Parsons reached me through our New Zealander friend.

M.W.F. (reading) The question that comes back at me after trying to meditate (Dr. R. – She has been ill) is how to be 100% in the Meditation, that is on the Mantra? One seems to be always in a cloud of jabbering thoughts, sometimes louder sometimes quieter. I'm afraid you've probably answered this question a thousand times before.

Dr. R. Well, it's a very general question which one ought to keep asking oneself all the time, not be contented with a small percentage of attention. So one sits in a relaxed but upright

posture and one concentrates for the first five minutes with everything you've got on simply repeating the Mantra and nothing else. Now five minutes is quite a long time, so I propose to give you five minutes and you will see. During that five minutes you are not to think of anything else! Bring your attention back to this, to the Mantra rhythm. Going, going, gone!

### MEDITATION

There, I make it a bare five minutes. Notice how time drags at the beginning; but did you find that you lost account of time when the Mantra began to go by itself? Anyway this is the thing, don't you think, Dr. Fenwick, that we should practise? We get very casual about it. I happened to mention it to our New Zealand friend who said, 'But he has answered my question.' And it worked, didn't it, for both of you? And for quite a number of people it works, if you have just enough energy for five minutes' concentration. As you go, you get more and more energy, so you can continue to the end of the half-hour and by then there is no effort at all and you are greatly refreshed.

It's like the story of the man who was standing outside his house with a little lantern and thinking how very long the journey would be and how very little was his light. A Realized man happened to come by and asked him why he was standing there outside his house like that. And he told him. And he answered, 'But you realise that this little lantern of yours is quite enough to light three or four steps ahead and so you get started and the light will travel with you.'

And that advice is just as true of a half-hour as it is of a whole day or of a lifetime. Any questions now? I should practise that quite a bit before you say in despair, 'I am no meditator'. (Pause) There are many periods in our lives when it is easy; when one just does it naturally and there is no big effort involved. But at other times it is very difficult. The most rewarding times are when you manage to do it when it is very difficult. (To Lady A. and M.W.F.) This is the thing, don't you think, that pleases the great Self more than anything?

Well, it would be nice to think that you are all going on in the silence (long peaceful pause) but what is happening? Questions! You've come a long way.

Mr. Fassett. How do you prevent yourself from going to sleep? I find that one easily goes to sleep when meditating.

Dr. R. Yes, very easily. Have a good sleep first! (laughter) Really go out like a light for a few minutes. Get an alarm clock. And then you will be as fresh as anything.

P. Jacobs. One thing that seems to cause sleepiness is when my head falls forward slightly. If I can sit with my head just slightly backwards, I'm less likely to go to sleep.

Dr. R. You're quite right. Directly my head comes forward, I go to sleep too. If you have your head too far back, it's not too good. It's good to have a straight neck with your head just slightly touching something, if you're not good at sitting upright with your eyes shut. The individual will find what postures send him or her to sleep for a time. It will change of course.

The real thing that gets one on is to regard this half-hour as a tribute to the great Self, a

thank you, for all the good that one has been receiving because things could have gone very differently, had we not been looked after. Everybody begins to realise that by himself he can do nothing and that something is looking after him. This is innate in all human beings at some time or another. So you try to approach this half-hour with a feeling of gratitude as if you were going to meet your best beloved friend. And *not*, 'This is *my* meditation; let me get as much out of it as possible. It's unfair doing all this effort and nobody gives anything back.' So try to regard it as not your meditation, but as a tribute to the Good Samaritan who has looked after us all our lives.

M.W.F. It often seems to me, Dr. Roles, that what is worst for meditation is a lot of piffling little thoughts about oneself. Important thoughts, and desires and ambitions don't seem to matter nearly as much as all this lot of 'I' stuff.

Dr. R. Yes; or some silly tune running in one's head; or all this commenting going on. Those must not be opposed or they only get bigger – you slide away back on to the Mantra. That's why having a Mantra is so clever. If you oppose them, those thoughts, however trivial, become more engrossing. So you don't oppose any thinking and you don't put trammels on your mind – don't forcibly discipline your mind. You simply slide away from all these trivialities back onto the rhythm. You must set something going. It's no good just sitting hopefully.

S. Beckwith. When the Mantra is going strongly and sounds loud, it is more difficult for the thoughts to intrude themselves but once it slows down, it becomes fairly soft and then I find that a sort of cloud of thoughts comes in much more easily.

Dr. R. Quite right; and one way of bringing oneself back to the Mantra is to sound it loudly inside oneself. When it gets quieter, there is, as you say, much more chance that it will be bypassed.

Dr. Fenwick, have you any other advice you can give on the actual technique of a half-hour? What we have to do is to switch off altogether from the dominant active hemisphere, don't we? And anything less than a switch is not enough.

Dr. F. What I find very helpful is one of the things that the Shankaracharya mentioned about expanding oneself or expanding the feeling of the meditation, making it very wide, very deep.

Dr. R. (to M.W.F.) That answers your question really. The meditation is a journey from the tiny narrow selfish world to the great Universe, and with that the time scale changes, as many people have noticed.

Q. I've found that switching off is like a focusing process but in reverse. As one turns to the Mantra initially, those obtrusive thoughts which seem to be at the forefront of one's consciousness are quite clearly in focus. And then as one persists in coming back to the Mantra, they seem to go gradually out of focus.

Dr. R. Yes. Well now that brings us to another thing that we want to say. There was the story of the blind man and the cripple – now what does 'being blind' mean? Why is it said that mankind consists of the union between a blind man and a cripple? What does being blind mean? There are two kinds of vision anyway – rod and cone vision; and the vision which

concentrates on detail is different from the twilight vision; and the twilight vision is what is needed in higher states. We are not, in fact, blind at all. The eyes are working, the spiritual as well as the physical eyes are all operating. Why does the child, when playing blind man's buff, get warmer or colder? Because he is looking in the wrong place just as we are. Being conscious means that you are looking for the source of consciousness in the right place. You're looking for it, for instance, inside yourself and not outside on the cinema screen. We're not really blind at all. Any questions about that? We have moments when we know that.

Sue Cassini. Dr. Roles, I think that has something to do with trust, because I feel that one of the most important things to learn is to trust that we do know and we are helped, but we so often forget.

Dr. R. Yes, we are awfully doubtful about ourselves in this day and age, aren't we. But one thing we can always trust and that is the Lord – the Atman and the Param-Atman – the Lord of the Universe. If we remember the Atman, the Owner of our particular Garden, and the Owner of the Universe who is of the same nature, if we show our trust and if we have faith in this Lord, then we get an immediate answer. It isn't Sue Cassini that one trusts or F.C.R., it is this Lord which is present in every single human being. And it is a wonderful arrangement that the Lord of the Universe should have a hot line connecting Him with every individual. This is what people don't realise. That this miracle is what one trusts. We've all had experience of moments like that. Do you agree with that? (Yes)

I wanted to bring your attention on to this – the nature of this Lord within us – the Atman who is really the whole of what each of us is. And knows all about what goes on inside us. The Param-Atman knows all about what goes on in the world around; but the Atman knows everything that goes on within. For that reason, we might give a question and answer from the Record.

Lady A. Dr. Roles referred to a question that he had brought from Mr. Pickering:

M.E.P. Questions must be a sign of the work proceeding – unless one is making some effort, there are no questions. But of whom should the questions be asked? Surely (after some years) it is to *ourselves* that the question is asked, and from the Self only that the answers can come?

Yet again, if a man by this logic were to say, 'I know all the answers and so need no help,' would he not stand in great danger from ego? Would His Holiness please show us how to resolve this everlasting paradox?

S. The answer is very simple. The Atman never questions because he has no reason to question. So whenever a question arises, it never arises from the Atman. It always arises from the Ahankar because Ahankar is not fully realized; it is not the Atman, it is not the Absolute; so it wants to know, and it is necessary that there should be questions because the full Realization has not taken place. As long as full Realization has not taken place, the questions must arise. But if one allows Ahankar to *answer* the questions, then one will be in trouble.

Should one put the question to the Atman? That could be a proposition. If the Atman has no questions, certainly He must know everything; and He must also know the question of the individual, so should one question the Atman who knows the questions?



No, one cannot question the Atman – one cannot ask questions of the Atman. But one can pray to Him. Be humble, and put up a prayer to the Atman to resolve the question – that is a way to appeal to the Atman, and then the proper answer will be available.

(Dr. R. So they are quite right to want the words of His Holiness, because we could not have answered the question in that way.)

S. In the Isha Upanishad there is something again very close to this question (His Holiness quotes verses 15 and 17):

One of them says that this Self is hidden by a golden sheath of this Universal Being, Universal Body; so the body, the senses, the mind, Buddhi, Chitta – all these form the golden body within which the Self is hidden, and then a prayer is put to this hidden Self.

Translated this reads:

That which gives food to everyone, that which is the supporter of the Universe, and the one who gives like no one else – that is the One who gives most, who resolves and keeps on regulating this whole Universe; who is brilliant like the Sun, who looks after all His children in this Universe and with all these glorious things.

O Self, who is in everything, please now remove this golden sheath so that the Truth, the Real Understanding, and the full Realization of the Self can take place.

So one does not question the Self; one only prays to the Self to resolve the problem.

(Record, 19 January 1974)

Dr. R. That is rather special because that is His own translation. One gets all sorts of translations of the Isha Upanishad and people find it very confusing indeed. But that is clear. And this approach to God within must be right. One must have the deepest humility and concentration, and approach with as much emotion as one can command, as much love.

M.W.F. That's something to do with the 180° turn again, isn't it Dr. Roles? One can't get the answer in the language of either the blind man or the cripple.

Dr. R. 'My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are My ways your ways.' We must come out of all ordinary sleeping dreams to the glare of full Reality.

Have you anything to add to that, Colin Lucas? I see you hiding there at the back!

C.L. I don't think so, Dr. Roles. How could I add anything?

Dr. R. Good. That's fine! (laughter)

But the nearer we are to being children, the nearer we are to that – become as little children.

So it comes to this. Human beings are made in a certain way. We have a duality of nature. We are united by having also in us something which unites this duality – the Overseer of the Garden in that story. The most important thing and what the whole game of Life is played for – the game of Hide and Seek – is this Divine Self.

H.W. Is the Overseer our contact with the Divine Self?

Dr. R. Not our only contact, no. We have Conscience which is wholly emotional, our

emotional contact; and Consciousness which is the mind, the reason. It was put in some special instruction when I asked the Shankaracharya, 'How could I get on?' He said, 'Learn to practise universal service. Be everybody's servant with the physical side. With the emotional side recall frequently the marvellous nature of the Divine Self, always remembering His never-failing benevolence. With the intellect, with the reason, realise that this Being knows everything and shows Himself in all that you perceive.'

So the Overseer is standing in for that intellect or reason. You have to cultivate in you by the purity of emotion something which will stand in for and follow on the conscience. You suddenly get a feeling – and the conscience is the quickest route, the emotion. But while we still have negative emotions and identification and everything which spoils our emotional life, we don't have that. So we clear out our emotion as far as we can, by not grumbling and complaining or criticising first of all; and then gradually not feeling any of this dirty emotion. Dirt that spoils our emotion. And while we are doing that, we need something to be going on with and the Overseer is our chauffeur. He drives our car, and as long as he is keeping watch we don't make too bad mistakes. But the Overseer can only point the way towards this emotional Light which is really like one's Beloved. You can see the signpost and the address and everything, but you have to go in to the Beloved One yourself. Nobody else can do it for you.

We all know this. It's only a question of how to communicate. What do you make the time?

Lady A. Nearly five past eight.

Dr. R. (After a very long pause) Very peaceful. I like a good silence.

Mr. Hodge. Dr. Roles, it may be a silly question but you spoke of cultivating the Overseer, and I wondered if there is some organ in us that is the Overseer?

Dr. R. Yes... what links the two halves of Mr. Hodge? I mean you could have three lectures about the physiology of that. But what is important for Mr. Hodge is that he recognises what it is that unites him – the two halves of his nature, you see. When this Overseer is not present, he is lost. He remembers nothing. He might do anything. When the Overseer is there with attention in the present moment, he *knows* where he is and who he is. You can practise recognising who that is and then you can go to some of Dr. Fenwick's lectures and hear about the physiology of it.

Mrs. Hall. Dr. Roles, it strikes me that the Overseer is a rather sleepy sort of chap. Could it be one of the functions of School rules to help keep him awake?

Dr. R. You speak too disrespectfully of the Overseer. (laughter) He is almost the biggest thing in you. But it is a fact that he curls up and goes to sleep in the Garden of Eden. And he needs the memory of the trouble that has arisen in the past when he went to sleep. It's memory that reminds you of what happened last time.

Mrs. H. That wakes him?

Dr. R. That's one answer. But you must answer that yourself.

Mr. Anholt. Dr. Roles, I believe that Mr. Ouspensky said that we can't stop our thoughts, but we

can at least be mindful of what we are thinking about. And apropos of what you've been saying, if we could, if not emotionally then certainly intellectually, keep turning our thoughts on God, it would be a great help.

Dr. R. He actually said, 'Turn your attention to what you are about – what you are engaged on.' Bring it back to what lies immediately in front of you.

It's perfectly clear when you're doing a part on the stage, isn't it? When you're attentive, you're taking in the audience, your own particular role and your own particular way of doing it – all your own self, all your own liabilities. You take everything in when you are attentive.

Mr. A. Yes, I was thinking more of when one has no particular area to put one's mind to – it leaps off onto a thousand and one things. When you turn your mind to the Atman, it does help enormously.

Dr. R. Yes, well what Mr. Ouspensky did say about that was that our mind changes so much that we are under the Law of Accident. Our mind is changing all the time if we have nothing to hold it. The Law of Cause and Effect is that effects follow your own actions, so you fill your day with as much cause and effect as possible and then there isn't room for accident. It's like a rudderless boat. If there is a rudder and a direction, you're not lost.

One of the things you said, and I was very sympathetic, was that when one is out of a job one keeps coming back to this thing and it soon becomes so big that it occupies the whole horizon if one isn't careful. I have very deep sympathy, and so have 2,000,000 others! But the answer is that you do as you have been doing – that you turn your thoughts to Param-Atman, away from that, and realise that if it is His will that you get a job, so much the better. But you must take the personal sting out of it, and the fear and the worry. There is nothing wrong with this Ahankara when it's facing facts. Everyone has a feeling of I. They must have a feeling of I. A lot of mental breakdown comes from loss of this feeling of I. What is wrong is when it is imaginary and it's something unreal. All right, it's a fact. I am out of a job at the moment. But all the unreality that collects around that – the secret fears and all that – that is unreal and it must be stopped, you see.

I was complaining about the difficulty of stopping this unreal imagination and H.H. said, 'Yes, it's much more difficult to kill a rubber snake than it is to kill a real one.' (laughter)

... Are you able to do anything while you're doing that job? Any meditating? Not much, are you, but nevertheless something prompts you, because you have meditated, doesn't it? There are full-time jobs and there are times when it's impossible to do two half-hours, and that's why I think this exercise of trying to do a full five minutes whenever you get the chance is a very valuable one in modern life. The Shankaracharya has said that there are times in his busy life when he can only do two minutes a day, but the point is the quality of his two minutes. He really gets there and has enough energy to last him the day. So if we improve the quality of five minutes, this is much better than poor quality long meditation. Although a half-hour is a bargain, don't forget, when you can.

M.W.F. Could you say a bit more about this because it refers to the difficulty of being in the present moment, and this seems to me to be crucial. One has to accept what is there. And it's the same with meditation. One can only accept what's going on with the Mantra in the



way it is.

Dr. R. The present moment acts as the most useful part about us. It's a sharp sword that breaks in on your dreams – the requirements of the present moment; you should welcome that. Why waste time dreaming about the past which is over and done with, finished; nothing you can do will alter it. Or dreaming about the future which hasn't arrived and will never be like your dreams. So don't waste your mental energy doing that. Just take it easy. Come back to what you're at. Our mechanical minds, the Manas, not the Buddhi, are fully occupied with secret fears and wishes for something other than what is present.

You remember the story we sent H.H. about the tramp who slept on a bench in the park every night, but who had lovely dreams that he was staying at the Ritz Hotel. Someone who knew him got a room for him at the Ritz and the next day asked him how he had slept, and he said 'Very badly, I dreamt I was sleeping on a hard bench in the park.' (laughter)

Q. Dr. Roles, I was talking about being in the present moment with somebody recently and they said they thought that was rather a silly idea because they didn't like most of their present moments. (laughter) He cited the example of washing up when it was far more enjoyable to think of something pleasant. How should I have answered that?

Dr. R. I don't think one should take this too literally. Personally I'd rather be anywhere than in the present moment in the dentist's chair. (laughter) I think one has to be intelligent about this – about what it really does mean. In factories where they are doing some routine job all day long – some poor girl is putting a cap on a bottle all day and every day, they have all sorts of things laid on, telly and films and things – to take their minds off what they're doing, otherwise they go crackers. So get the point of this instruction, that's the thing, wouldn't you say?

Lady A. It's a state or a taste of a state.

Dr. R. The other thing is you don't notice a moment of great possibility if you are dreaming of the future or the past. In French it's *cherchez l'heure*. You spot the moment of possibility if you're in the present and not too far away. You can answer in that way if you like. Write back and tell us what he said! (laughter)

The trouble with old age is that I had something on my mind and it has gone! (laughter)

Lady A. It doesn't seem to go very far!

Tony Anholt. Not just the perquisite of old age, Doctor!

Dr. R. Oh, you really have that, do you? (laughter)

Lady A. It's past your time anyhow.

Dr. R. It really is! It's twenty past, isn't it. But we are moving. We must be encouraging ourselves. We are getting along all together, because if one of us gets fully Realized, the whole lot get fully Realized. That's the point of a School. So good luck to any one of us who gets fully Realized! (laughter)

Oh, I know what I wanted to say. I saw Kedros just there... Mr. Kedros, you sent us this lovely lecture by the Archimandrite of the Greek Orthodox Church, didn't you? He began

his address by saying that the first thing is to listen, and that is what the monasteries of Mount Athos are all about: Hesychasts – Listeners – listen for the Divine Voice in the silence, in the stillness. And he gave an example from the Goons where one of the Goons picks up the receiver and says. ‘Hello, Hello, Hello, who are you, who’s speaking?’ And the answer was: ‘You are!’ (roars of laughter) And that’s with us all the time and we call it God – even the Reverend Ian Paisley! (Laughter)

\* \* \*