

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.N. MEDITATION GROUP

On 14 April 1977 the United Nations Meditation Group celebrated its seventh anniversary of service to the U.N. Community in the Chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations. The programme included speakers, choral readings, a chamber group and the singing of twenty songs dedicated to the U.N. by Sri Chinmoy, who has been Director of the Group since its founding in 1970. The transcript of the ceremony follows.

Mr. Robert Muller, Director and Deputy Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs: We are celebrating today the seventh anniversary of the United Nations Meditation Group and Sri Chinmoy's thirteenth year in the West. I have known you only for the past few months, but may I say to you briefly what I have learned from your Group and from your person.

I have learned first that you are giving to many of the United Nations staff a life dimension which goes well beyond their daily work, namely a spiritual dimension, an internal dimension. You are making them better people, deeper people, and by doing this you are giving them happiness.

Members of the U.N. Meditation Group I know are generally profoundly happy people and this is due to a large extent to your teachings.

Secondly, I have learned that, thanks to your efforts, several thousand people around the world better understand the United Nations. The U.N. is a little bud of hope in the long evolution of mankind, a bud that must be cared for, that must be loved and encouraged, that must be helped so that we may win once and for all the battle of peace against war, the battle of justice against injustice, the battle of kindness against violence. This is a prodigious task for the United Nations and it doesn't have many friends to perform it. But thanks to you, in many places of the world the true image of the United Nations is known, not solely the image of turmoil and conflict but the luminous vision and dream of a good earth inhabited by good people. This is the deeper human story which goes on with the United Nations, this time on a world scale. You have perceived it very profoundly and you have been able to convey this momentous fact to your followers in faraway countries.

The third lesson I have learned was of direct benefit to me. During my thirty years of service in the United Nations I sometimes felt to be one of those who had the wildest dreams for the United Nations. I came from a place in Europe where from my window I could see people hating and killing each other across a border, from a family

dressed in different uniforms and shooting against each other. For me the United Nations was an immense hope, the only hope to see vanish forever such situations. But sometimes I felt that I was a dreamer, that I had too wild a vision and too many unrealistic hopes. Then recently when I read your writings and when I heard you, I discovered that there was someone at the United Nations who was far ahead of me, who had a much deeper perception of the world organization than I had ever dared to dream, someone who, by a mysterious process unknown to me, had understood that here was the beginning of a new story of mankind, a new paradigm of the times to come. You have made comments about the future of the United Nations which I would never have dared to make, and I believe you because you have a very unique perception, a view that goes deeper into the blood and flesh of human evolution than all our knowledge of the so-called daily "reality". Your wisdom goes beyond history. Like all great masters of philosophy you are deeply entrenched in the workings of the human being. You know intimately the soul, the heart and the mind of the human being. You know his relations with the universe, with the cosmos. You have perceptions which not many of us possess today. It is very reassuring that someone of your stature has come to the United Nations and proclaimed that the world organization will be the ultimate answer to the human problems of this

planet. In one of your Dag Hammarskjöld lectures on the inner message of the United Nations you said: "At the end of its voyage, there is every possibility that the United Nations will be the last word in human perfection. And then the United Nations can easily bloom in excellence and stand at the pinnacle of divine enlightenment." I attach great importance to this visionary message and I was glad to read the following words by Donald Keys in the preface to one of your books: "When I encountered Sri Chinmoy at the United Nations, I knew exactly what he was doing there, and he knew exactly what I was doing there. It was and it is a matter of greatest joy and hope that a person of his endowments and stature has accepted the United Nations as an area of responsibility, such persons usually being cloistered and unreachable, and not outwardly involved in human affairs." This is exactly my feeling today, after having known you for a few months. You have enriched my person, my thinking, my heart and my soul, and I am deeply grateful to you for it.

We are also celebrating another day of life, another day without a war on a planet from which year after year the forces of evil and war will hopefully recede. Planet Earth for me is a beautiful planet. In the dark universe we have light, we have sunshine, we can look at flowers, rejoice at colours, touch forms. Ours is a truly incredible planet, probably a unique planet in the entire universe.

But we do not recognize it sufficiently. We are not thankful enough for it. Each day ought to be a day of gratitude and celebration of the miracle of life and for living on such an extraordinary planet in an infinite, mysterious universe. So our thanks today must go far beyond our individual efforts and lives. We must rejoice for being participants in this miracle, for having been admitted to the banquet of life. Through our work, our joy and our kindness towards others we will repay a little of the gift bestowed upon us and contribute to making the miracle even greater, even more beautiful. How many times do I remember the words of our friend Pablo Casals when he exclaimed: "The child must know that he is a miracle, a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been and until the end of the world there will not be another child like him. He is a unique thing, a unique thing, from the beginning until the end of the world. . . . Yes, I am a miracle like a tree is a miracle, like a flower is a miracle."

This is what I feel myself. Like Casals, who had unlimited hope in the United Nations and gave it all his heart and support, I feel so privileged to be allowed to work here for the fulfilment and embellishment of the miracle of life. We are indeed very privileged people.

May I thank you for all you are doing and formulate to you my very best wishes for the future. I hope, dear Sri Chinmoy, that soon in the world

millions of people will be reading your writings as so many are today inspired by the great writings of Sri Aurobindo. But you have not stayed in Auroville. You have come to the United Nations, to the birthplace of a new all-human civilization. And this, for all of us, is a very momentous event.

K. (John) Ofosu-Benefo (presenting Sri Chinmoy with a bound volume of the "Meditation at the United Nations" Bulletins): Beloved Guru, brothers and sisters, Mr. Muller has admirably summarised what you have done for the United Nations community and around the world. The poetry that we heard from Mr. and Mrs. Donald Keys, the music that the musicians have played and the songs that were sung also show your mission at the United Nations, your vision of the world—of world union and world perfection.

We at the United Nations and members of the United Nations Meditation Group especially, are very grateful to the Supreme for sending you to help us on the path to spiritual development. We are grateful to you, our beloved Guru, that when the clarion call sounded and you were invited to come to the United Nations and offer spiritual food to members of the United Nations community, you accepted the challenge. You did not shirk your responsibility, even though you knew that in these troubled days many people are skeptical about the

power of religion to bring about peace, and the mere mention of spiritual development of people meets with derision in many quarters. The United Nations Meditation Group is now flowering. Also, since the United Nations Meditation Group was established, many United Nations staff members who are not members of this Group have formed other groups to study the human mind and to learn more about the Supreme Being.

These are eloquent testimonies to your work here and also around the world, through the Centres you have established. To our annual observance of your crossing over to the West, people come from as far away as Australia, Europe, Canada and the West Coast of the United States to participate in the event. Obviously, the spiritual path you have shown them means a lot to them. Otherwise, they would not go to the expense of travelling all the way to New York City to participate in it. I pray to the Supreme to grant you a longer life, so that you can continue to render these dedicated services to the international community and to humanity as a whole.

Sri Chinmoy: I wish to offer my heart's soulful gratitude to each member of the United Nations Meditation Group and to all those who are here today. I wish to offer my heart's oneness with each member of the United Nations Meditation Group and with each seeker here. Now, in silence I wish to invoke the presence of the soul of the United Nations to bless us.