

# Meditation at the United Nations



MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP  
UNITED NATIONS



the Heart-Home  
of the World-Body

Inside Front Cover  
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# MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP

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Since January, 1973, the United Nations Meditation Group has published the monthly bulletin, *Meditation at the United Nations*. This publication offers a basic introduction to meditation techniques and spirituality through questions and answers and lectures, and also reviews the Group's activities. Profits from the sale of this bulletin are donated to UNICEF.

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## UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP

United Nations:



the Heart-Home  
of the World-Body

WE BELIEVE and we hold that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The United Nations Meditation Group consists of U.N. delegates, staff members and NGO representatives who believe that a spiritual approach to world peace is inherent in the basic U.N. ideals and can go hand in hand with political striving for U.N. goals. The Meditation Group at New York Headquarters was inaugurated on 14 April 1970, when it invited the well-known mystic and philosopher Sri Chinmoy to lead its meetings. Since then the U.N.M.G. has sponsored conferences on the role of spirituality in world affairs, held symposia on the philosophy of world peacemakers, convened formal interfaith gatherings and hosted concerts, poetry readings and benefits for disaster relief and UNICEF at Headquarters in New York and in Geneva.*

### *Schedule of Meetings:*

Tuesdays: 1-2 p.m.

U.N. Secretariat, New York  
Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium

Fridays: 12 noon to 1 p.m.

U.N. Secretariat, New York  
Room 550

Tuesdays: 12:30-1:30 p.m.

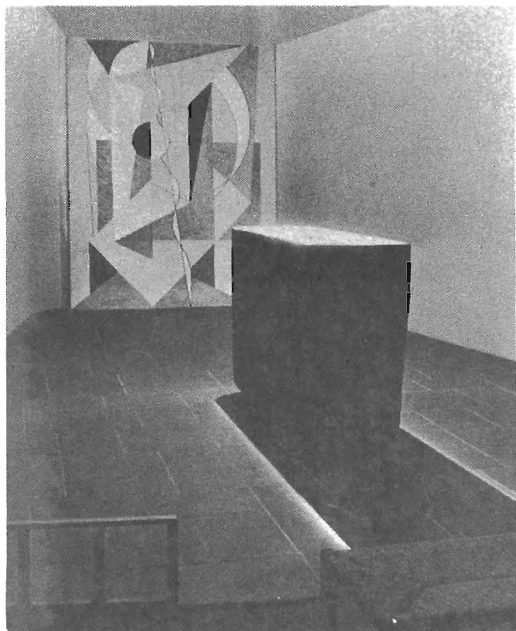
U.N. Secretariat, Geneva

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*Above:* A view of the original U.N. Meditation Room at New York Headquarters in Lake Success. The furnishings of this room are now displayed in the Wainwright House, in Rye, New York. *Below:* The U.N. Meditation Room, which was remodeled under the direction of Dag Hammarskjöld, as it appears today. (Photos: *United Nations*)





## THE U.N. MEDITATION ROOM: Prayer and Meditation at the United Nations

At an informal gathering at the Wainwright House in Rye, New York, on 10 August 1977, speakers from the United Nations and the Wainwright House honoured Weyman C. Huckabee, the Laymen's Movement Executive Director from 1941 to 1969, for his part in the creation of the U.N. Meditation Room and in the decision of the U.N. to open and close its General Assembly Meetings by observing a moment of silence. The Programme, to which the members of the United Nations Meditation Group were invited as special guests, recognised the involvement of the "Friends of the United Nations Meditation Room" and the Laymen's Movement for a Christian World in the efforts to establish the Meditation Room at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

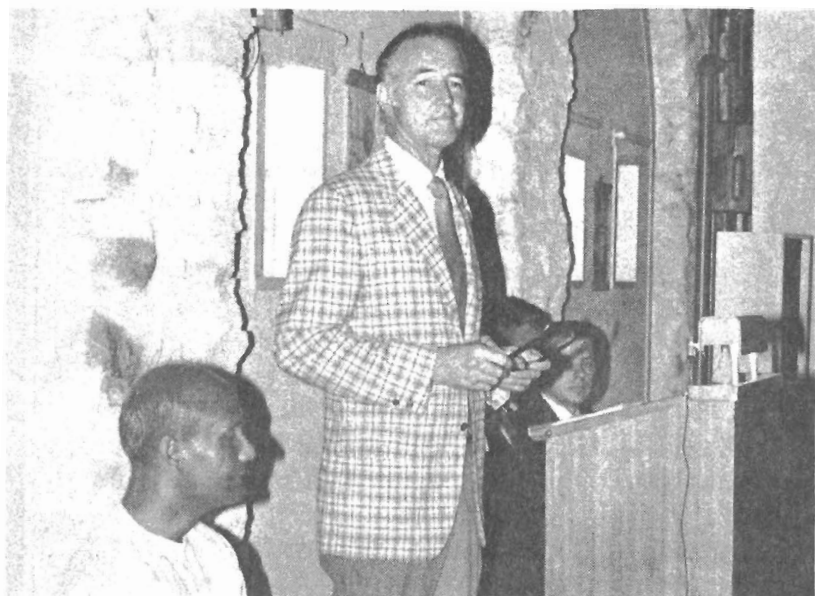
There were comments by Mr. J. W. Ballard, President of the Movement; music and meditation by Sri Chinmoy, Director of the United Nations Meditation Group; and talks on prayer at the U.N. by Mr. F.W. Carpenter, former Press Officer of the U.S. Mission to the U.N., and Mr. Robert Muller, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for IAAC; remarks by a representative of the Mayor of Rye, and Dr. A.D. Sunderwirth, Executive Director of Laymen's Movement.

*Dr. Alfred Sunderwirth:* My name is Alfred Sunderwirth and I am the Executive Director of The Laymen's Movement and Wainwright House. On behalf of these organizations, their boards, committees and staff, I would like to welcome all of you. It is a special pleasure to welcome those of you who are visiting from the United Nations Meditation Group.

There is one thing that brings all of us together here—hope for a better world. We realize that the world on the outside has to be shaped by the world on the inside of us. Its formation on the inside of us comes about through our meditation, our sharing and our praying together.

We are here to remember Weyman Huckabee and to be thankful.

Some of you have been asking about this magnificent mansion here on Milton Point of Long Island Sound. It was built in 1929 by Colonel Wainwright. During World War I Colonel Wainwright was an aid to General Pershing and was stationed in an old mansion in Amiens, France. He liked it so much that when he came back to the United States he modeled his family home here on Milton Point after that old chateau. It was the home of Colonel Wainwright's family until 1951 and then given by the daughter, Fonrose Wainwright Condict, to the Laymen's Movement. It is also known as Wainwright House, Center for the Development of Human Resources.



Dr. Alfred Sunderwirth



Mr. John Ballard

It is my pleasure to present Mr. John W. Ballard, President of the Laymen's Movement, and of Wainwright House, Center for the Development of Human Resources. Jack is also Human Resources Development manager in Mobil Oil's International Division. I greatly admire and appreciate this man and there are many good things I could say about him. But it is enough for now to say, Jack Ballard, it is a pleasure to present you at this time.

*Mr. John Ballard:* Thank you all, thank you Al. If we could—and I think we can with considerable ease with those of you who are sitting here—we would like officially to start our wonderful celebration and dedication in the typical way in which we start all of our meetings here, by taking time to center ourselves. So join me in that for a moment.

*(Silent meditation follows.)*

And so we begin. Sometimes it lasts a little bit longer, but I believe we are going to have a musical selection in a moment, music for meditation. That will be a wonderful thing for all of us.

When I first became interested in the Laymen's Movement, I was attracted by the recognition and purpose of trying to connect one's personal life—inner life, soul life—to the practical affairs with which we work all day long. That is our

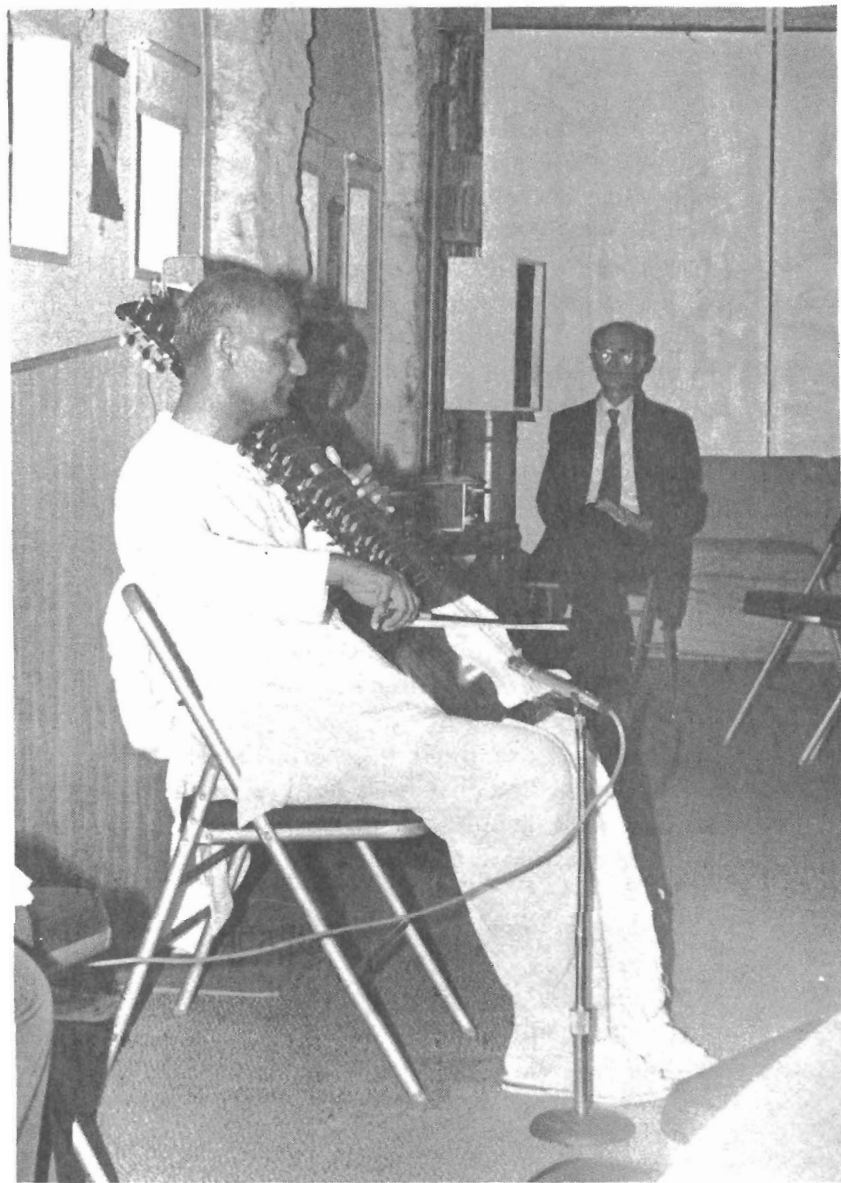
reason for being—for the period since 1941 and after we settled here, since 1951. We have had people from all religions and no religion; people interested in life and spirit and peace in the world—and in the heart—here for all that period of time. We welcome all of you.

I was attracted, too, by the international relationship of the Laymen's Movement, with its support through prayer and meditation of the United Nations. And I am still very much in my own daily work personally interested in the work of the United Nations. So this is indeed a wonderful occasion on which to honour an organisation that has kept the United Nations in its thoughts on a regular basis, its membership, and to honour a particular gentleman who conceived of the notion for this organisation to enter into this relationship with the United Nations.

At this time I would like to present to all of you, Sri Chinmoy. I find that he is not only a spiritual but an artistic genius, who it is indeed a great pleasure to have with us at this time.

*(Sri Chinmoy plays the Indian esraj.)*

*Mr. John Ballard:* Somehow words seem a bit paltry, but thank you very much. The Laymen's Movement maintains a non-governmental organisation relationship to the United Nations. We have a delegate and an alternate. Mrs. Hollister is our



Sri Chinmoy plays the Indian esraj.

alternate, Frank Carpenter is our delegate. He is a member of our Board of Directors. He is a former journalist, and he worked for a few years as a member of the United States Mission to the United Nations. He is still in touch with the United Nations on a regular basis, and he has served on committees working with the Office of Public Information and with the NGO Executive Committee.

Frank, at this time I think that your particular style of the English language is very appropriate, perhaps the most appropriate way in which we can follow that lovely meditation of music.

*Mr. Francis W. Carpenter:* Thank you for this introduction, but I am not quite sure about the particular style of the English language because when I left Tennessee and Georgia many years ago I didn't know they were going to come into the prominence they have just come into. I do enjoy being up North.

I feel a little bit inclined to share your view as to the unworth of words at this particular time. I am indebted to you, sir, for the selection and for the moment of meditation it gave me. At this particular moment in my life, at this time, I have great need for meditation and other things. I feel as I look around this group a little bit like an elder statesman, so much youth and beauty here. But you

have to temper the thing a little bit with some old people. And I go back to 1947 or '48 when a young fellow showed up at the Paris General Assembly with an idea and he kept working on it until we now have a moment of silence at the beginning of the General Assembly and at the end of the General Assembly, and the Meditation Room. I am speaking about my old friend, Weyman Huckabee, who came to Paris to meet a few people. In those days I was privileged to be with Associated Press and you know how people in public life are: If there is a news person around somewhere, they will pretend they don't see him until all is quiet and then they will get you around the corner and they will tell you sometimes what you want to know. Anyway, I knew a few people. Weyman wanted to meet them. He met Senator Austin [Warren R. Austin, former Senator from Vermont and Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations at that time], Trygve Lie [Secretary-General of the United Nations] and some others. Weyman put his project to them. He gave me the privilege of announcing in a press dispatch that they were trying to build up a meditation room and a minute of silence. Weyman wanted more, but we were doing good to get a minute of silence. And the reason we got that was that such people as Zafrullah Khan [Pakistan] was having difficulty finding a place to pray. And he was known sometimes to go to the telephone booth



and face East which was the best way he could find to pray. Some others of our friends who had their moment of prayer found a private room. Since then, we have got the Meditation Room and it is well worth the time and trouble. Senator Austin was a devout Christian. And some of you may have read somewhere about the time when the Security Council was debating the Palestine case, which we still have with us and which we will have when your grandchildren are here—it will be with us a long time. And Austin was debating and he told his friends that the Arabs (Muslims) and the Israelis (Jews) should settle their dispute in a true Christian manner. Austin was a little taken aback at the laughter that resulted and then he realised that it would be a hard job to get those two conflicting parties to use his recipe. We have since that time had thousands of visitors at the United Nations go to the Meditation Room. Many, many books have been filled with their names.

It is a most imposing sight most of you know, because, in addition to the Meditation Room, you have the plaques there showing tribute to people who have given their lives for peace. And I can think of no more worthy sacrifice anywhere that one should lay down one's life for peace. Even though we might not die on the battlefield or anywhere else, all of us are doing what we are doing, are laying down our life for peace, and with that I leave the message with you. Peace be with you.



Mr. Francis Carpenter



Mr. Robert Muller

*Mr. John Ballard:* Thank you. Now we are very honoured to have with us tonight Mr. Robert Muller, U.N. Deputy Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs, to speak about prayer and meditation at the United Nations today.

*Mr. Robert Muller:* Thank you very much.

This evening is a very moving event for me. When I learned that the old U.N. Meditation Room from Lake Success was here in Rye, I tried to remember as many details as possible of the first premises of the United Nations on Long Island. I found that I was unable to remember the hall of the General Assembly, the Security Council and even my own office. But when it came to the Meditation Room, I remembered many details. I could see clearly the large tropical tree trunk from Africa, the bowl of flowers or greenery on top of it and the semicircular rows of chairs for the visitors. Tonight, after thirty years, I saw it again and I was struck by the accuracy with which it had remained engraved in my memory. I am therefore tempted to believe that despite all the attractions of material life and the fascination of new knowledge, spirituality and its symbols go much deeper and leave an extraordinary, indelible mark in us. Yes, I lived a very rare moment tonight, rediscovering emotions and images which were a third of a century old.

You asked me to say a few words about prayer and meditation at the United Nations. It is a captivating subject on which I could say a lot, for I have collected material relating to it for some time. Most striking is the fact that many of the world's principal religions are accredited to the United Nations as non-governmental organizations. Several of their leaders have visited the United Nations. Most memorable was the visit of His Holiness Pope Paul VI during the General Assembly of 1965. Many religions have special invocations, prayers, hymns and services for the United Nations. I have brought with me a file from which I could read to you several of such texts. Among the most interesting examples are those of the Unitarian-Universalist and Baha'i faiths, which sometimes give the impression of being little United Nations of their own. It is a common practice of the Unitarian-Universalists to display the United Nations flag in their places of worship.

When it comes to the United Nations proper, one can obviously not say that it is a spiritual organization where one would find much prayer. How could it be otherwise? For the U.N. is the creation and reflection of governments, most of whom have secularized themselves, i.e., separated spirituality from their daily lives and preoccupations. Nevertheless, prayer and spirituality play a role in the United Nations. It is the moving experience, for example, to witness the minute of

silence for prayer or meditation which follows immediately the opening of the yearly General Assembly, when men and women from all nations center their minds and souls on the job to be performed, and when at the end of the Assembly a similar minute of silence permits them to reflect on their achievements and failures.\* Thus, the world's greatest gathering of nations is placed under the symbol of silent prayer or meditation. Also, there are many delegates and world servants whose cultures do not make any distinction between spirituality and public service. Then there are those who are deeply attached to their faiths or for whom the United Nations is a new form of spirituality and ethics, while remaining faithful to their respective religions. Some delegates are known to meditate in a place of worship before pronouncing a speech in a U.N. assembly. One of the greatest speakers ever at the United Nations, Professor Bellaunde from Uruguay, meditated on his speeches in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Then we have the U.N. Meditation Room which is visited by heads of state, chiefs of government, distinguished world personalities and hundreds of

\*Rule 62 of the *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly* provides that: "Immediately after the opening of the first plenary meeting and immediately preceding the closing of the final plenary meeting of each session of the General Assembly, the President shall invite the representatives to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation."

thousands of visitors each year. Another manifestation of spirituality in the United Nations is the U.N. Meditation Group, present here today. And is it necessary for me to refer to the example of Dag Hammarskjöld, who found inspiration for his work as a world servant in the Mystics of the Middle Ages and whose *Markings* overflow with spirituality; and of U Thant, the man from the Orient, who could see no difference between life and religion, who held that spirituality was the highest of all human needs and virtues. The Western distinction between secular and spiritual lives was totally incomprehensible to him. He found in such cleavage one of the principal causes of the world's conflicts, tensions and injustices. For him, every single moment of life was the occasion for prayer, virtue, reverence and gratitude. He was of Buddhist faith, a religion which knows no God, and yet he was one of the most spiritual persons I have ever known.

There are many of us in the United Nations for whom the co-operation of all nations around common goals and values is a new form of religion, a supreme path or way. The United Nations is a place of convergence for the dreams and prayers of all peoples for a better world. After thirty years of international service, I cannot help noticing that we see in the U.N. the same perennial human dream which has obsessed all great religions and philosophies, namely, the establishment of a

peaceful, happy and brotherly human society on Earth. But there is one difference: while in the past, all religions and philosophies were born within specific local, cultural contexts, today we witness the birth of a new philosophy or ethics which originate from a central place of synthesis where all dreams, aspirations, claims and values of mankind converge and are tested against the limits and constraints of our planet. This is entirely new. It constitutes one of the greatest and most exciting attempts at total human fulfilment in the entire evolution of the human species. Yes, every conceivable dream, idea and problem finds its way to the U.N. or one of its specialized agencies. There has never been anything like it. It is a magnificent story, a profound transformation of the human society, a new paradigm of the coming age. True enough, it is as yet a fragile and incomplete story, for the U.N. largely reflects the priorities and dominant values of our time. For the poorer countries the priorities are food, health, shelter and education, without which there can be no decent life. First one must live, then one can philosophize. In the Western world too, material, scientific, technological and intellectual achievements occupy generally the highest priority. There we still live in an age of rationalism which believes that everything can be explained by scientific, rational means. This too is reflected in the United Nations. But there are increasing voices which

point to other values too. U Thant, in particular, was the first great prophet who reminded us of the moral and spiritual dimensions of life and who firmly advocated the development of our moral and spiritual values in order to catch up with rapid technological and scientific advances. For him, the solution to many of our individual, national and international problems rested in the practice of truthfulness, integrity, tolerance and brotherhood. And beyond these moral virtues he felt that each individual carried in himself a fundamental question regarding our relationship with the universe and the eternal stream of time. Hence, the paramount place he accorded to spirituality. In his memoirs he wanted to show how spirituality and philosophy could lead and guide politics.

We have not reached that point yet in the United Nations, but year after year one can observe how moral and ethical issues are being brought one after the other to the world organization. A host of codes of ethics and conduct are being elaborated at the U.N. The Charter itself is one of the greatest codes of ethics ever drafted for the behaviour of very powerful institutions: armed nations. It is the Ten Commandments of nation-states. Although its rules are still often broken, it nurtures progressively a better behaviour, a greater understanding and an improved general moral political atmosphere. Our scientific and industrial age has yielded incredible



progress to the human race and we should be immensely grateful for it. But this success perhaps led us to believe that material achievement and intelligence were the apex of civilization. There no longer seemed to be any need for ethics, purity, morality, compassion, love and spirituality. This unnecessary poverty of our age is now being increasingly recognized. Man has been able to extend tremendously the power of his hands, senses and mind through extraordinary technological and scientific achievements. It remains now for him to extend similarly the power of his heart and of his soul. This will be the great challenge of the coming age, and it has been put before us very forcefully by a younger generation tired of war, hatred, hypocrisy and injustices.

I have a Christ in my office. My colleague next door has a statue of Shiva. U Thant had a Buddha in his room. Each of us, be he from North or from South, from East or from West, has his own way of expressing faith in the human race and destiny. When a conflict breaks out in any place of the globe, we are all in agreement, all unanimous that the conflict must be stopped, that people cannot be allowed to kill each other, that life must be revered everywhere, that the human person is the supreme care and alpha and omega of all our efforts.

So, for me the United Nations is one of the greatest and most beautiful places and sagas of modern times. King Paul of Greece once saw it as a

“cathedral where we can worship what is best in each other”. I would not have dreamt of that when I joined the United Nations thirty years ago. The U.N. has seen its scope widen in every direction, due to the imperatives of new global, interdependent world conditions. But people do not really know how vast and vital its activities are. Every conceivable subject, from outer space to the atom, from the conservation of the past to the moulding of the future, has been brought to it. The Copernican tapestry of its work encompasses almost the total condition of mankind on this planet. During the last few years, a sequence of resounding world conferences has yielded an unprecedented knowledge of our planetary home. Never before had there been a World Population Conference, a World Environmental Conference, a Human Settlements Conference, a World Water Conference, a World Desert Conference, etc. All this is part of one of the most prodigious pages of evolution. It will require the detachment and sense of time of future historians to appraise fully what happened in the last third of our century and to understand what the real contribution and significance of the United Nations were.

Meditation, prayer, dream, hope, vision, monitoring, guidance, foreseeing and planning all go hand in hand in so many different ways at the United Nations. For me the tall building of the U.N. is an edifice of human hope and dream

jutting into the universe and receiving from that universe increasingly clearer messages. Perhaps we have reached a time of cosmic evolution. Year round people from all creeds and cultures assemble here to design a better future for the world. And in my opinion they will succeed. Our children will know a better future, a more peaceful world, a fulfilment of individual human life and consciousness as was never seen before on this planet. Little by little, a planetary prayer book is thus being composed by an increasingly united humanity seeking its oneness, its happiness, its consciousness and its full participation in the continuous process of creation and miracle of life. Once again, but this time on a universal scale, mankind is seeking no less than its reunion with the "divine", its transcendence into ever higher forms of life. Hindus call our Earth Brahma, or God, for they rightly see no difference between our Earth and the universe. This ancient simple truth is slowly dawning again upon humanity. Its full flowering will be the real, great story of the United Nations.

A newsman once asked Secretary-General U Thant:

"What will some future journalist, writing 100 years from now, describe as the most significant event of our time?"

U Thant, who was a humble man, never inclined to exaggeration, answered:

“The signing of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco on 24 October 1945.”

After 30 years of service in the United Nations and observation of our planet and of its people, I do fully subscribe to that statement.

Meditation has known a vivid revival in the West during the last few years, thanks mainly to oriental sages who have reminded us of some ancient and well-tested methods of introspection and inner peace. I asked myself how it came that the United Nations possessed a special place for meditation practically since its foundation. Members of the Meditation Group were kind enough to consult old files and to interview senior U.N. officials. They came up with a most interesting story: at the end of World War II, a group of U.S. citizens felt that in order to prevent another war, it was necessary to restore prayer and meditation in all walks of life, especially public office and private business. They founded an association called the Laymen's Movement whose very first efforts were to ensure that a place of worship be created at the United Nations. I read fascinating stories on how this all came about, how the minute of silence for prayer or meditation was introduced in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, how the Meditation Room was approved, built and cared for, how Dag Hammarskjöld took a personal interest in a more modern Meditation Room for the new headquarters of the U.N. in Manhattan,

etc. It was one of those moving, deeply human stories which abound in the U.N. and among its supporters but which, alas, remain all too often untold and unknown to the public.

In those stories, one name kept holding the forefront: that of Mr. Weyman C. Huckabee, Secretary-Treasurer of the Laymen's Movement. He had retired after many years of service, but I was able to secure his whereabouts and telephone number on St. Vincent Island in Georgia. I called him and told him that I was interested in the history of the U.N. Meditation Room. He remained silent for a moment and then I heard him say this on the other end of the line:

"As I stand here at the telephone listening to you, my eyes can see a chair from the old U.N. Meditation Room in Lake Success. It is inscribed in my name and was given to me when I retired from the Laymen's Movement. The Old Meditation Room is at Rye, New York, in Wainwright House, the seat of our Movement. It was given to us by Dag Hammarskjold in recognition of our help in financing the new Meditation Room. I will gladly send you photocopies of all the historical material I possess concerning the U.N. Meditation Rooms."

He did. I read it with ever-mounting interest, including the very remarkable thoughts expressed by Dag Hammarskjold on a subject which was very dear to his heart. The idea quickly arose of a special visit of the U.N. Meditation Group to

Wainwright house in order to pay tribute to the Laymen's Movement and to the old Meditation Room. The Laymen's Movement kindly arranged for the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Huckabee. Thanks to pictures which I found among the material sent to me, Domenico Mazzone, the reputed sculptor and great friend of the United Nations, made a bust of Mr. Huckabee which I am very pleased to present to the Laymen's Movement on behalf of the U.N. Meditation Group. May it be a token of our deep appreciation for the successful efforts of your Movement in introducing right from the start the practice of prayer and meditation in the United Nations. Without your faith, the United Nations would not be quite the same today.



Mr. Robert Muller with Mr. Weyman Huckabee and his wife after the presentation of the bust by Mazzone.

*Mr. Weyman Huckabee:* Thank you very much. When I became ill about five years ago, in a conversation with my doctor he asked, "What worries you most as you carry out your duties in the course of the day?" I could not think of anything. Then he said, "What about speaking in public?" And I said, "Yes, that does worry me. I find that I feel drained after having made a talk in public." "In that case," the doctor said, "you must discontinue speaking in public." So I have a good excuse not to make speeches.

I'd like to tell you one experience I've had. It has to do with my meeting Pope Pius the XII when I was given a private audience to talk with him about the Meditation Room in the United Nations and about the day of prayer set aside for prayer and meditation for world peace. He received me warmly. I shall never forget his taking my two hands in his and guiding me over to his desk. I was surprised when he asked me, "How is my English?" I asked why there was still so much violence in the world in spite of the efforts made to bring peace. He said, "That is a very difficult question." Then, after a pause he continued, "Because, even though we know the Truth, we do not abide by it."

I am very happy to be here. I didn't think I would be coming back to Wainwright House. I thought I had been "farmed out." There were four big parties given in my honour when I resigned, so I do not need any more parties, but I am grateful for your love, for your concern and for your friendship. Thank you.

*Mr. John Ballard:* One of the things we are interested in, of course, is our own relationship with the community where we live, as well as in the world, the planet Earth, the universe, and whatever. Mayor Carey is a friend of ours in Rye. He was not able to be with us but the City Manager in Rye, Mr. McEvoy, is with us. Would you like to say a few words?

*Mr. McEvoy:* Mayor Carey extends his regrets in not being able to be here tonight. I know he would be very happy to be here with you.

For the City of Rye I'd like to extend to Mr. Huckabee my sincerest congratulations for your very outstanding work and for the honour that you give us today by being here with us. I would also like to extend the city's congratulations to the Laymen's Movement and your work in the Wainwright House, which is revered by the city, as you know.

Public service, in my case a small part of the cosmos-local government public service, may parallel your United Nations service in our relationship to our international organization. The International City Management Association has long recognized the value of prayer and meditation. I think we beat you, Mr. Muller. Since 1914 we have practised prayer at our many meetings and in fact initiated all of our meetings with prayer. Sorry to say, however, that ten years ago this



practice waned. I think this relates somewhat to the waning in our country of prayer and meditation at that time. I am happy to tell you, however, that during the past three years our prayer and meditation sessions have blossomed. The last prayer meeting was attended by 400 or so City Managers, all together for that very same reason.

I think you might be surprised also to know that we have very well-attended Transcendental Meditation sessions and also something quite new, Relaxation Meditation for the Office Environment. That says something for our day-to-day living and our spirituality.

Our role, of course, is to teach our City Managers, our public officials and our local government officials something about the cosmos, to help us relax through prayer and meditation and to improve our feelings of well-being so that we may in fact improve the quality and the rewards of public service at the local government level. We are honoured that you are here today, very much honoured, and the city sends its best wishes.

*Mr. John Ballard:* One of the things that interestingly occurred this evening was that somehow or other we all felt as if we knew you very well, Mr. Muller, and we felt that we knew you very well when you sat down. However, we had no chance to show our appreciation. I would just like

to express from all of us our tremendous appreciation for your recognition of this situation and your being here.

Dr. Sunderwirth, if you would like to close with a few thoughts and impressions of the evening, and of tomorrow.

*Dr. Sunderwirth:* Thank you, Jack.

I would be remiss if I didn't read this mailgram from Martha Poughborn. She was a member of the prayer group here in the early days of the Laymen's Movement. "Greetings from Indiana. Congratulations for Weyman, love to Susy. God's richest blessings on all."

For 36 years the Laymen's Movement has been a living organisation. What's going to happen during the next 36 years? As we look back just a little bit, it seems as if there were giants in those days, Weyman Huckabee, Walter Kitty, Frank Carpenter. What about the future? Our hope and our sense of responsibility are vitalized when we think about others that walk in their footsteps, Robert Muller, Jack Ballard and others. The hope those men had in the early days is still in our hearts today.

As we continue along that same practice of prayer and meditation, may the God of the whole universe be with each one of us, as He has been and continues to be with them. God bless you all. Amen.



The U.N. Meditation Group and friends outside the Wainwright House.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*On 16 August 1977 Sri Chinmoy answered the following questions about the United Nations during a meeting of the U.N. Meditation Group.*

*Question:* In what way does the United Nations please you?

*Sri Chinmoy:* The United Nations has a seeking heart and also a oneness feeling. This seeking heart and this feeling of oneness we may not outwardly see; and even if we do see these, we don't see them all the time. But in my case, I see and feel them all the time. These two things please me most: the United Nations feeling of inner oneness, its feeling of world family, and also its seeking heart. These two achievements of the United Nations always please me most.

*Question:* How can the individual seeker offer his aspiration to the world community?

*Sri Chinmoy:* If the individual seeker feels that the world community, the outer world, is something outside himself, then he will not be able to offer his aspiration to the world community. But if he

feels that the world community, the entire world, is within him—inside his body, inside his soul—then he can pray and meditate in order to raise the standard of the world community, which is part and parcel of his own life.

First he has to feel his oneness with the world community, and then he has to feel that the world community is not outside his sphere of existence, it is not something else, or somewhere else, it is within him. When he can feel that, he will be able to contribute much more to the improvement of the world community. Then, anything that he does for the world community is also for his own nourishment, his own success and his own progress. So the most important thing is for him to feel that the world community is inside him, part and parcel of his own aspiring consciousness. Then, his own prayer and meditation will help the world considerably. That is the easiest way to raise the standard of the world community.

*Question:* What is the best aspect of the Supreme to concentrate on for transformation?

*Sri Chinmoy:* It is always advisable to concentrate upon the Compassion aspect of the Supreme for your personal transformation or world transformation because it is the Compassion aspect of the Supreme that expedites our progress. When the

Supreme offers His Compassion, it is all unconditional. If we concentrate on His Heart aspect, or Delight aspect or Peace aspect or any other aspect, we may have in our mind the thought that we have given the Supreme something. We have given Him a drop and now He may give us the ocean. Always there is a feeling of an exchange. He is infinitely richer, infinitely more powerful than we are in every way. He has infinite Capacities whereas our capacities are very limited, so we are giving Him what we have and He will give us what He has. If we have that kind of feeling, transformation will take time.

But if we approach His Compassion aspect, we make ourselves feel that we are in no way adding to what He has, or offering Him anything that He needs. Instead, we feel that we need our own transformation and world transformation, and out of His infinite Bounty, unconditionally He is giving this to us. If we have that kind of approach to the Supreme, then our heart's gratitude will overflow and it will accelerate our progress. So the Compassion aspect is always best if we want to accelerate our own progress and the progress of world evolution. This is the fastest way to make individual and collective progress.

*Question:* Which is the best way for a nation to contribute to the world at large?

*Sri Chinmoy:* Each nation has to feel that there is only one nation: one world nation and one world family. We are not only of the One but also for the One. The Source is One and that means that the end is also One. When we say that we are of the One but for the many, we create a problem. As soon as we say "many," we feel that there are many different minds, different approaches and different realities; there is no feeling of oneness. But if we say that we are of the one and for the one, then there is no problem. Take a tree, for example. A tree has branches, flowers, leaves and fruits. If we don't take the tree as one unit or one reality—if sometimes we appreciate the flowers, sometimes the fruits and sometimes the branches, if each time we pay attention to one particular part or achievement of the tree—then we are unable to pay full attention to all the things that the tree embodies, and this creates problems. But if we take the tree as one reality and simply water the tree or sit at the foot of the tree for our prayer and meditation, for our own illumination, then all our problems are solved.

So each nation should feel that there is only one nation, one reality, and inside that one reality are all the nations. Otherwise, if one nation is meditating, it may say, "Let me pray and meditate for all the nations." And then, in a few days' time, if the other nations make some mistake or say something wrong, immediately that particular

nation will feel displeased and will stop praying and meditating for the others. But if that particular nation feels that all the nations have been combined and amalgamated into one reality, then there will be no problem. It will all the time pray and meditate for the other nations.

The best way for the individual nation to make progress and also to add to world progress is to feel that there is only one reality. This reality is the source, the goal, and it is also the traveler. In that way, the individual nation will make fastest progress and also will be able to contribute much to the world at large most satisfactorily. Always it has to think of the source, of the course, the journey, the road and the destination — everything — as one, all one.

*Question:* Is it a good idea to have other meditation groups affiliated with this one?

*Sri Chinmoy:* Yes, it is a good idea, if it is possible, to have meditation group connected or, you can say, affiliated with this one. We have to feel that we are one and try to feel this oneness through our dedicated and sincere efforts. All individuals have the same goal and that goal is perfection. This perfection comes only when we have the feeling of oneness. In aspiration we are one, in realisation we are one, in revelation we are one, in



manifestation we are one. Since we are one it is a very good idea to have as many meditation groups as possible in the United Nations international community affiliated with this one.

*Question:* Is the Supreme pleased with the world progress?

*Sri Chinmoy:* Yes, the Supreme is pleased with the world progress. Again, the Supreme believes in continuous progress. Whatever the world has already achieved has pleased Him, but He expects something more, and that something more has to be achieved by the sincere efforts of the United Nations, that is to say, by the people who work at the U.N., the people who love the U.N. and the people who are one with the ideals and the goals of the U.N. We can achieve what the Supreme wants by virtue of our joint efforts in the field of aspiration and dedication.

We believe in the world's continuous progress. For that continuous progress we have to aspire and dedicate ourselves more to the cause of the United Nations. Satisfaction is not a finished product. If we have come up to a certain standard, then our progress becomes like a stagnant pool; only in continuous progress do we find satisfaction. First we come up to a certain standard, which is what we originally wanted. Then we look around and see

that somebody else has achieved something higher, something deeper, and we also try to do the same. It is not out of jealousy or a feeling of competition, no; only it is an inner urge that makes us want to try to surpass ourselves, to surpass our own capacities.

So the Supreme is definitely pleased with the sincere aspiration and dedication that the United Nations has offered so far to Him. But again, this achievement or this offering is not enough, for the Supreme wants continuous progress. Therefore, we have to make a special effort to make more progress if we want to please Him continuously.

# World Gratitude Day, INC.

A NON-PROFIT, TAX-EXEMPT CORPORATION

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*In Process of Formation*

*(and those indicated above)*

August 4, 1977

Sri Chinmoy

United Nations Meditation Group

777 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

Please accept the enclosed copy of "Gratitude Is..." in appreciation of your distinguished service to the spiritual community.

Established twelve years ago, World Gratitude Day is a holiday dedicated to the ideal that the simultaneous and worldwide sharing of positive emotions will create a new spirit of world community. Each year the officers and members of World Gratitude Day honor individuals and/or organizations whose activities enhance the concept of globalism. This year we will be recognizing the leaders of ecumenical groups within the major religions. As we believe that your distinguished service in this field merits commendation, we hope you will consider accepting our award this year.

I have enclosed a packet of information concerning Gratitude Day. If you have any further questions regarding our organization please contact me or my assistant, Sharon Krohn.

Incidentally, our awards ceremony will be held on September 21st at 12 noon at 132 West 31st Street in New York City. We look forward to having you with us.

Respectfully,

Edna Fuerth Lemle  
President

EFL:sk

Copy to Kevin Keefe

Gratitude  
Day  
is celebrated  
on  
September 21st

IDEAL: To unite all peoples by simultaneously sharing a positive emotion.

GOAL: A day when the triumph of the spirit can make a world community.

## POEMS AND ESSAYS ON GRATITUDE

*Following are selections on gratitude from Sri Chinmoy's writings.*

In the aspiring world ingratitude is the worst poverty.

\* \* \*

A heart of loving gratitude to God is man's constant fortune.

\* \* \*

To receive one thing with joy is to give ten things in return with gratitude.

\* \* \*

When gratitude takes birth, it will be man's glorious discovery.

\* \* \*

We all know that the abode of gratitude is the heart. Strangely enough, gratitude often manages to hide from its abode. But on the sunlit path, soulful gratitude is always visible, looming large in the aspirant's heart.

\*\*\*

Gratitude  
Is the only aspiration-soul  
In our life of  
God-invoking,  
God-embodying,  
God-revealing  
And  
God-manifesting  
Reality.

\*\*\*

Gratitude  
Is my friend;  
Therefore  
Heaven-pride I have,  
God-Smile I am.

Light, you have nullified  
My yesterday's fear.

I am grateful.

Bliss, you have nullified  
My today's doubt.

I am grateful.

Consciousness, you have nullified  
My tomorrow's pride.

I am grateful.

\* \* \*

How to please God? I can please God by offering  
Him what I have and what I am. What I have is  
gratitude. What I am is aspiration.

\* \* \*

The feeling of gratitude makes a man truly  
happy, and God is pleased when a man is truly  
happy. Dostoevsky declares, "I believe the best defi-  
nition of man is the ungrateful biped." This may  
be true when a man swims in the sea of his body's  
ignorance. But when a man lives and swims in the  
sea of his soul's light, he is all gratitude. He is the  
constant expression and spontaneous revelation of  
God the Receiver and God the Achiever.

\* \* \*

. . . Gratitude has to be full of the soul-consciousness; otherwise it is not gratitude. Then it becomes a tricky way of gaining something more from the person to whom we show our gratitude. But soulful gratitude is offered to someone for what we have received. Even if that person does not give us anything more in life, not even an iota of joy or love, we shall eternally remain grateful to him for what he has done. We shall always be grateful for the way his gift has added to our life of aspiration, or considerably transformed our life and carried us consciously to the highest Source. When we offer soulful gratitude, it is our eternal recognition of what we have received from someone on our eternal journey across Eternity to Infinity's shore of Beauty, Light and Delight . . .

. . . If you feel grateful, sincerely grateful, soulfully grateful, then you have achieved the highest achievement that the earth-consciousness can offer to the Heaven-consciousness.

. . . You can feel the necessity for gratitude if you feel that gratitude is your living breath. Feel that if your gratitude-breath is extinguished, then you are dead. Each time you offer gratitude for a fleeting second, feel it is a living breath.

On earth there is nothing so important or significant as gratitude. In God's case, the most significant thing He has is Compassion. God is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent, but His Compassion-Power makes us close to Him. If

He did not have Compassion-Power, we would not care for Him. If we can show God an iota of gratitude, God feels that within us He can exist. Our gratitude is God's Existence, God's House, God's Abode. God has to live in the street unless He can live inside our gratitude-heart.

. . . Gratitude is the most precious thing that a human being can have. If someone has a million dollars and if someone else has only an iota of gratitude, in the Eyes of the Supreme he who has an iota of gratitude to God is far superior.

Gratitude is the purest thing that we can have. It is immortal in us. If we can offer to God whatever is immortal, soulful and significant, then that is most meaningful.

. . . Every morning you should offer gratitude to God for your existence. You should offer gratitude because God has kept you on earth to manifest Him. So gratitude is the most important thing in our life. Nothing is more important in God's Eye than gratitude.

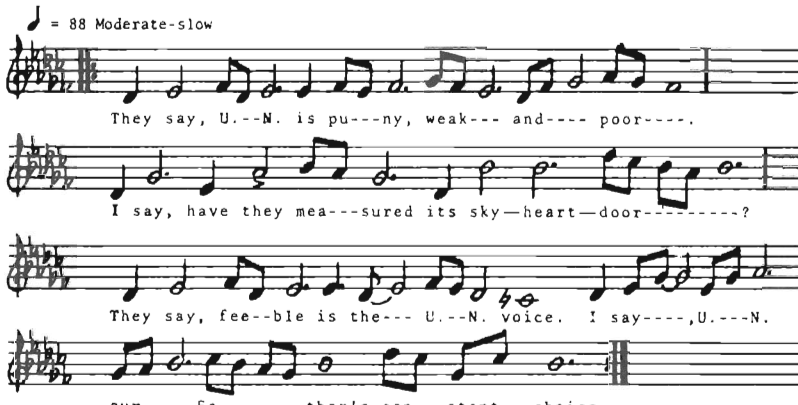
. . . Even if you realise the Highest Consciousness, still gratitude will always remain. Gratitude is sweetness and delight. Delight we experience no matter on which plane of consciousness we are. Gratitude is earth's greatest delight and Heaven's greatest delight. When the cosmic gods get something from the Supreme, they offer delight and gratitude.


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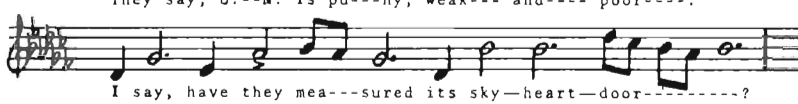
## THEY SAY

They say, U.N. is puny, weak and poor.  
 I say, have they measured its sky-heart-door?  
 They say, feeble is the U.N. voice.  
 I say, U.N. our Father's constant choice.

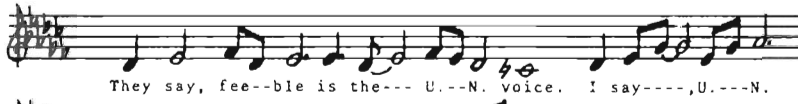
The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a tempo marking of a quarter note followed by '= 88 Moderate-slow'. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below each staff, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

The first staff of music, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a tempo marking of a quarter note followed by '= 88 Moderate-slow'. The melody is written in eighth and quarter notes.


They say, U.--N. is pu---ny, weak--- and--- poor----.

The second staff of music, continuing the melody from the first staff.

I say, have they mea---sured its sky-heart-door-----?

The third staff of music, continuing the melody.

They say, fee--ble is the--- U.--N. voice. I say---,U.--N.

The fourth staff of music, concluding the piece with a double bar line.

our---- Fa-----ther's con---stant-- choice.

Other publications about the United Nations include: *U Thant: Divinity's Smile, Humanity's Cry*, and four collections of talks at the U.N. by Sri Chinmoy: *The Garland of Nation-Souls, the Tears of Nation-Hearts, Union-Vision* and *Reality-Dreams*. Also available is *A Salute to the United Nations Security and Safety Service*, a compilation by the U.N.M.G. of informative talks and personal interviews with Security staff (profits are donated to the Security Benevolent Fund).