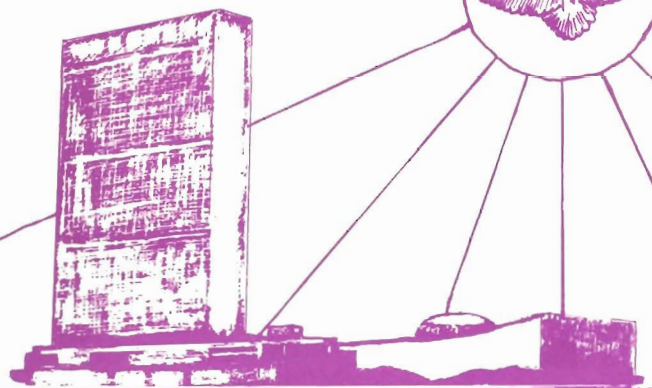


Meditation at the United Nations

United Nations:



the Heart-Home
of the World-Body



Monthly Bulletin of the
United Nations Meditation Group

Vol. VI, No. 6
27 June 1978

THIS IS A COUGH - BLENK

MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE
UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP

(1)

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.

(3)

EDITOR'S NOTE

The United Nations Meditation Group is an association of U.N. delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents, who believe that inner reflection and meditation can bring us in touch with the founding spirit of the United Nations and inspire renewed dedication to its ideals. The main focus of our activities, both in New York and in Geneva, is our twice-weekly meditations, which provide an opportunity for quiet, spiritual renewal in an atmosphere reflective of the highest purposes of the world organisation. In addition, through an ongoing series of conferences and symposia, we provide forums where ambassadors, Secretariat officials and staff, religious leaders and other world-minded individuals can share and reinforce their spiritual vision for the United Nations.

The United Nations Meditation Group was founded in 1970, when interested staff members invited the distinguished spiritual leader Sri Chinmoy to conduct non-denominational meditations at New York Headquarters. Since then, the Group's membership has grown considerably and its expanded activities have been warmly received by the U.N. community.

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A MEETING WITH INDIAN PRIME MINISTER DESAI

During his visit to the United Nations for the special session on disarmament, Indian Prime Minister Desai received members of the Meditation Group in a private meeting on 12 June 1978. The Group sang a Bengali song composed by Sri Chinmoy in honour of the Prime Minister, and Sri Chinmoy presented him with a plaque of appreciation with an inscription of the song. Sri Chinmoy and Prime Minister Desai spoke about the Bhagavad-Gita and the need for spiritual discipline in man's efforts toward world peace.

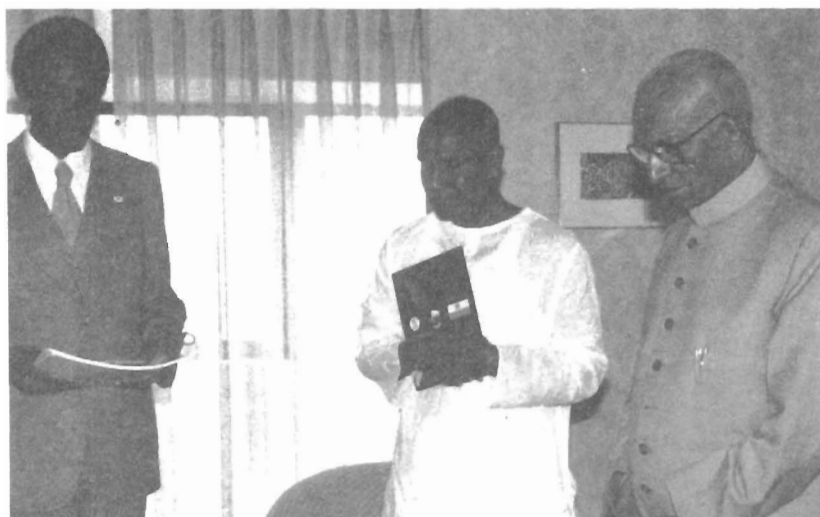




Sri Chinmoy: Dear Prime Minister, with you India is great and good; in you India is safe and happy.

Prime Minister Desai: India can't be saved by one man. India can be saved only if people do their thing properly.

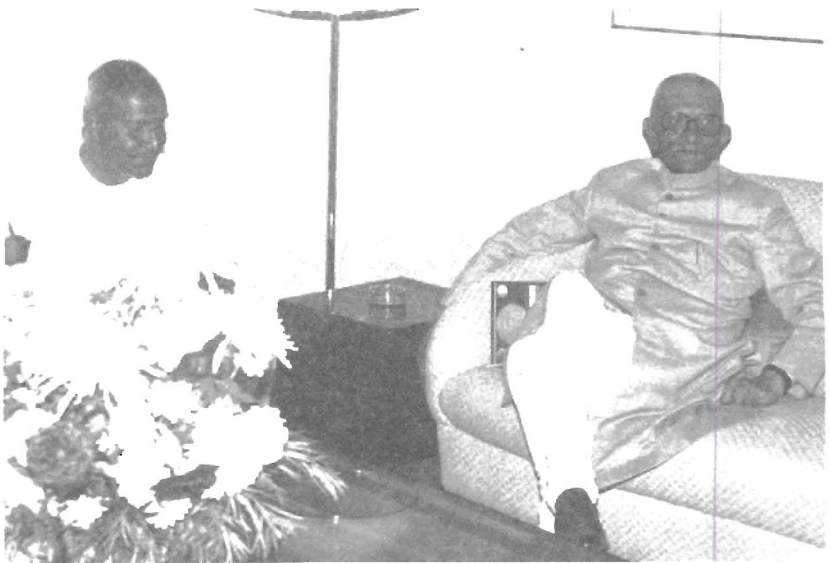




Prime Minister Desai: All of you work at the United Nations? So I hope you will unite the United Nations. The United Nations is called 'United Nations', but they are not yet united. So you have to unite them.



Prime Minister Desai: I have written a commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* because I could not find the meaning of some verses satisfactorily in all the commentaries that I read. Therefore, only when I committed the *Gita* to memory, when I was in jail in 1934, and I began to recite it every day and applying it to myself, then the meaning became very clear, because I had complete confidence and faith in the *Gita*, that what it says is right. If I don't understand it, it is my fault. And that is why I wrote the commentary, because when a friend asked me questions about two or three verses, I couldn't give him a satisfactory reply. I thought I would put down on paper what I understand. That is my sole writing. The *Gita* gives a solution to every problem. At any rate, when there is a conflict of duty, it gives the right answer.



Sri Chinmoy: Right at the very beginning Arjuna had that problem.

Prime Minister Desai: It is a problem everywhere. In everyone there is a problem of good and evil. It goes on all the time. So one must accept the *Gita's* guidance. The gist of it is that you must be at peace with yourself. There should be no tension, no excitement, no anger.

Sri Chinmoy: And for that you have all along taught us to lead a disciplined life.

Prime Minister Desai: To have discipline is not enough. It must be self-discipline.

Sri Chinmoy: That is what you have been teaching us for so many years. A life of discipline is of paramount importance.

Prime Minister Desai: Without that you can get nothing.

PRANAM PRADHAN MANTRI DESAI

*Pranam pradhan mantri Desai
Bharata basir paraner bhai
Satya pujari shanti adhar
Bharata tarir he karnadhar
Chaliche bharat druta ati druta
Purna haibe manoratha puta
Shuna taba joy chira nirbhoi
Tyagi bhaskar anandamoy*

“Salutation, Prime Minister Desai!
You are the Brother of Indian hearts.
O worshipper of Truth,
O embodiment of Peace,
You are the Pilot Supreme of Indian Boat.
Your Bharat is running fast, very fast.
Your hallowed longing
Shall ere long be fulfilled.
Hearken your victory,
O eternally dauntless one,
O manifestation-sun of infinite Delight!”

PRANAM PRADHAN MANTRI DESAI

words & music by
Sri Chinmoy

♩ = 126

Pra--nam pra--dhan man-----tri De-----sai

Bha-ra-ta ba--sir par-a--ner-- bhai Sat---ya

pu-ja--ri shan---ti ad---har Bha-ra-ta ta-----rir

he--- kar-na-dhar Pra--nam pra--dhan man-----

-----tri De-----sai Bha-ra-ta ba--sir

par-a--ner- bhai Cha-li-che bha---rat dru-ta a--ti

dru--ta Pur-----na ha-i--be

man-o-ra-tha pu---ta Shu--na shu--na shu--na

ta---ba--- joy chi--ra nir-----bhoy

Tya--gi bhas-kar a-----nan-da-moy-----

D.C. without repeats

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON PRAYER

On 6 June 1978 Sri Chinmoy answered the following questions on prayer during a meeting of the Meditation Group.

Bill Paradis: What is the best way to pray for others?

Sri Chinmoy: The best way to pray for others is first, before you even start praying, to invoke the Presence of the Supreme. Then, once you feel His Presence, try to see or feel the people for whom you are praying inside the heart of the Supreme's Presence. Once you invoke His Presence, He will definitely come in His Subtle Body. His Presence may not take a human form, and you may not see Him in a human body. But you will be able to feel His Presence, and in your feeling a form will be embodied. Inside the form, try to feel the person for whom you are praying. If you can invoke the Supreme's Presence and feel inside His Presence the human beings for whom you are praying, then that will be the most effective way of helping them through your prayer.

But before asking the Supreme to help with your prayer, first ask Him whether you are supposed to pray. This you have to do. Otherwise, you may be praying for others out of sheer attachment, so that the other person will be pleased with you and do something for you in the outer world. If you get a message or inner feeling from the Presence of the Supreme that you should pray for that particular person, then only you should pray for him. Other-

wise, the Supreme's Presence will be there, but He might not be at all pleased by your prayer. And even if He answers your prayer, it will be with tremendous reluctance, because the after-effect may be harmful. Before you pray, if you get express permission from the Supreme to pray for someone, then you are doing the right thing. But if you do something in this world without His approval, sanction or permission, then you will be committing a mistake.

Suppose somebody is very sick. You may think that if you pray for him, it will be a good thing, because he is suffering. But perhaps God wants him to have this experience at this particular time. You have to know that God is infinitely kinder than any human being could possibly be. If you pray to God, "Cure him, cure him," you may be standing in God's way. God wants to give him the experience of suffering in His own way. So always ask God if it is His Will.

Saroja Douglas: How can we make our prayer most intense?

Sri Chinmoy: You can make your prayer most intense through your gratitude-heart. While you are praying, prayer is coming from your heart. You have to feed the prayer with gratitude. Gratitude is the nourishment. If somebody is going to run a race, he needs to be fed—not just before he runs, but a few hours before that. If anybody is going to do something great or good, he needs nourishment. Similarly, if you don't nourish the prayer with your gratitude-fruit, then your prayer will not be intense.

Nothing divine will be intense unless and until you are grateful to the Supreme. You want intense love for God, intense devotion to God and intense surrender to God's Will. But you will not have these divine qualities unless gratitude comes to the fore for what God has given you and for what God has not given you. The good things that you prayed for, He has given you, and the bad things that you prayed for, He has not given you. You have to be grateful for the things that He didn't give you and for the things that He did give you. If He had fulfilled your desires, then He would have proved to be your worst enemy. But instead of asking Him to fulfil your desires, if you asked Him for aspiration, then that He has granted you.

At every moment during the day you are energised by good thoughts or assailed by bad thoughts. You have to know that the good thoughts which you get are coming directly from the Supreme, and the will to fight and destroy or illumine the bad thoughts is also coming from the Supreme. He is inside you as a Warrior when wrong thoughts come to attack you, and He is inside you as the heavenly Father, the Supreme Beloved, when good thoughts come to illumine you. So, naturally you are grateful.

So use your gratitude-heart to feed your prayer. Early in the morning, if you don't renew your gratitude-heart during your meditation or prayer, then nothing will be intense. At every moment your gratitude-heart must feed your intense inner cry and aspiration. Then you can intensify your prayer, your aspiration, your dedication and everything.

Karen Hoarty: Since the Supreme is fully aware of all of our needs, why is it appropriate to pray?

Sri Chinmoy: If you get something through prayer, it only increases its value in your life. You can tell the world, "I prayed for it. That's why I got it." A child is hungry and he tells his mother, "I am hungry." Then the mother feeds the child. Then the child will be able to tell the world, "Look, I have this kind of closeness with my mother." Yes, the mother would have fed the child on her own, but the fact that he asks and his mother listens to his request gives him joy. It means that she is at his beck and call. Because of his inner connection and closeness with his mother, the child can ask the mother to help him.

God sees everything, but in the outer life, if we ask Him for something and He gives it to us, then we get the glory. At that time, however, as individuals we are separated from Him. We feel that God is somewhere and we are somewhere else. We never think that He is around or beside us. We don't remain in our highest consciousness where we feel that we and God are one. If we feel that we and God are one, then the question of prayer does not arise, for our needs are His needs.

As long as we feel separated from God and feel that we have to ask Him for what we need, then we get joy from our prayer. We feel, "Just because I prayed, God gave me what I wanted, so I am worthy of having His Compassion." He would have done it unconditionally, but we would not have had the same kind of satisfaction. In a race, if somebody tries very hard and runs the whole course, she will be so delighted when I give her a trophy. She

has run with such difficulty and with so much trouble, and she feels that she has earned the trophy. Now, even if you don't finish the race, I can also give you a trophy, because the trophy is there, but you will not feel satisfied because you have done nothing. God can give everything unconditionally, but you will not be happy, whereas the person who tries and shows the capacity really deserves what he gets. Here the fulfilment of our prayer is the trophy. If somebody prays and meditates and gets something, he will get more satisfaction than if God had given him the thing unconditionally.

Prayer intensifies our intimacy with the Supreme. Meditation increases our oneness with the Supreme. Before we meditate and become one, we have to acquire intimacy. First we have to feel that we and God are intimate friends; then we can realise our oneness-reality with God. Before we meditate, if we pray for a few seconds, then we are developing our intimate connection with the Supreme. Then, once we start meditating, we are developing our oneness-reality with the Supreme. Prayer is intimacy. Meditation is oneness. Unless we are intimate, how can we become one? We have to become intimate first; then only we can become one.

A LECTURE/DEMONSTRATION
BY C. V. NARASIMHAN
on the
DEVOTIONAL ELEMENT OF
SOUTH INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

On the evening of 30 May 1978, Mr. C.V. Narasimhan, Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Office of Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination, offered a lecture/demonstration on the devotional element of South Indian Classical Music, sponsored by the Meditation Group. The concert of music and illumining instruction was followed by Indian snacks and lassi.

Following is a transcript of Mr. Narasimhan's lecture, plus Sri Chinmoy's expression of gratitude on behalf of the Meditation Group for the Under-Secretary-General's exemplary dedicated service to the United Nations.



Mr. C.V. Narasimhan, Under-Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination: Good evening, Sri Chinmoy, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends. When I planned the programme with Sri Chinmoy and Gail Gershon, I did not expect that I would have the pleasure of being accompanied on this occasion by these two distinguished artists, Rukmini on my left, a very fine violinist, and Rajarao on my right, a very fine percussionist. They have come here on a concert tour to play with Sri Kalyana Raman, who is also a very good exponent of Carnatic music and its great musical tradition.

As you can see from the programme, I am going to give examples of the devotional element in our South Indian classical music which is called Carnatic music. Now, the Sanskrit word *bhakti* is a word which has many different meanings. But most important of all, it means the complete surrender of one's self to the Divine Will. This does not mean that you have no freedom at all; this only means that you accept what comes your way with complete faith in the Lord's Compassion and Goodness.

I am going to sing to you, if time permits and you are patient enough to sit it out, a baker's dozen of songs from the three greatest composers in our system. There are many others whom I would have liked to include but it is not possible because of time. These three composers are called the Holy Trinity of South Indian Carnatic music. Their names are Tyagaraja, Syamasastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar. Each of them was a great devotee and saint. Curiously enough, they were all born within a few years of each other in the same small town in South India called Tiruvarur in the mid-18th century.

Syamasastri stayed in Tiruvarur all his life. Tyagaraja moved to a town called Tiruvaiyyar, the town of the five rivers, where to this day there is a shrine in his memory. Muthuswami Dikshitar was our great wandering composer. He went everywhere in India on foot and wherever he went on a pilgrimage, he composed a song in honour of the presiding deity in that particular pilgrim centre. The result is that these compositions are a veritable guide, a conducted tour, of our great pilgrim centres and they form a virtual gazetteer of the great pilgrimage centres of India.



These three composers were all completely selfless and their music means so much to me because it is not mere esthetic pleasure that you are seeking when you listen to this music. It is the possibility of actually soaring on wings of song into the ethereal heights where it is possible for you to establish communion with the Lord Himself. Many of these songs have a supreme moment and as we go along I will explain to you what I mean by the supreme moment. But they cannot easily be explained. Tyagaraja says in one of his compositions, "I cannot explain all this to you; it is something that you have to experience by yourself."

I can only report that the object of our music, as conceived by these great composers, is not to entertain; it is not to please the ear. It is to reach out and touch your heart and to make it possible for you to tune yourself in to the same wavelength as the Infinite so that you can establish in that supreme moment a communion with the Lord Himself.

I am very grateful again to my two accompanying artists. I only feel that this recital will not do justice to their great talents because the programme is conceived in a different way from the usual concert of Carnatic music.

I will start with a brief invocation to Lord Vighneswara, also called Ganapati and Vinayaka, the Remover of Obstacles. Then I shall sing a song in praise of the Divine Mother by Syamasastri—it is in the raga *Ananda Bhairavi*, and the tala is 8 beats: 4 plus 2 plus 2 beats.

Song

I shall now sing for you a piece by Tyagaraja. As I told you a little while ago, Tyagaraja settled down in Tiruvaiyyar, the city of the five rivers. And he has composed a song in praise of Lord Shiva, the consort of Jagadamba. This is a very unusual song because Tyagaraja is usually praising the deity. In this case he indulges in a form of praise which is called *nindastuthi*. Nindastuthi means you praise by calling the Lord all kinds of undignified names. And here he says, "Who gave you the name of *Pranathartihara*?" *Pranatha* is saluting. *Arti* is difficulties. *Hara* is a man who removes these difficulties. "Who said that you should be called Shankara, the doer of good? Who says that you remove the difficulties of your devotees because in my case it has not happened. I have been saluting You, Sashtanga, as they say, with every one of my eight limbs. And I have been praying to you and yet you have not come to my rescue. Who gave you this name, Pranathartihara?" This is the meaning of this song, *Ilalo Pranathartihara*. The raga is *Atana*, and the rhythmic pattern is the same as the last one except that it is a faster tempo.

Song

Now we have heard a sloka in praise of Vin-yaka, we have heard a song in praise of the Divine Mother, we have heard a song in praise of Lord Shiva. And now it is the turn of Subrahmanya, the son of Shiva and Parvati.

We also had one piece by Syamasastri and one piece by Tyagaraja. It is the turn of Dikshitar now. And I shall sing for you one of the greatest compositions, one of the treasures of our classical

system in the raga *Kambhoji* beginning with the words, “*Shri Subrahmanyaya namaste.*” I am encouraged to sing this song because I have the support of Rukmini and Rajarao. This is indeed a very fine piece. All Dikshitar compositions are in Sanskrit. As I said earlier, the raga is *Kambhoji*, and it is set in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, which we call *rupakatala*, with a very slow tempo.

Song

I will now go back to Tyagaraja. Besides being a composer, he was also a very wonderful and gifted musician. But he was not interested in exploiting his musical talents to build up a little financial security for himself. He used to go out with a begging bowl and collect some rice with which he used to offer *prasad* to Rama, the idol which he always worshipped, and then he satisfied his own creature needs in this way. Tyagaraja had a brother who thought that this other-worldly brother of his was really not using his talents to the fullest extent, and his brother was always goading him to give public performances for money and so on, which Tyagaraja was not willing to do. But one day Tyagaraja received an invitation from the court of the King of Tanjavur, in whose jurisdiction he was resident, inviting him to be a court musician, the *astanavidan*. And Tyagaraja asked himself this rhetorical question, “*Nidhi tsala sukhama?*” “Is a great deal of wealth going to give me happiness?” “*Ramuni sannidhi seva sukhama?*” “Or is it the immediate presence of my Lord Rama and my opportunity to serve Him, is that going to give me greater satisfaction? Oh my mind, please

tell me truthfully." And then he goes on asking, "Which is sweeter, yoghurt, butter, milk? Is this sweeter, or the nectar, the ambrosia that flows from the *bhajana* of Lord Rama? Which is sweeter?" And he goes on asking, "What is the point in my serving a human being when I have the Lord to serve?" And he sent a polite regret to the King of Tanjavur. This is the song that celebrates this particular occasion in Tyagaraja's life. It is in the raga *Kalyani* and the rhythmic pattern is what we call *misrachapu*. It is a little unusual for western ears, but I hope you will like it.

Song

I will now sing you a piece which was made very famous by my Guru, Shri Musiri Subrahmanya Aiyer. It is one of the saddest songs of Tyagaraja. It begins with the words, "*Nagumomu ...*" And in the song Tyagaraja says, "I am unable to see your smiling face." You know Tyagaraja had to see the Lord every day, he had to have a vision of Him. "I am unable to see your smiling face. Don't you realise how much I am suffering because of this? Won't you come and save me?" And then he goes on, "Is it possible that some of the people around you have been carrying tales against me and saying that Tyagaraja is a bad fellow, don't associate with him? This is not possible because the people around you are all very decent people. Or is it possible that your *Vahana*, your vehicle Garuda, the eagle, said, 'You are driving me too fast. I can't go that fast. Where is Tyagaraja? He is somewhere on earth. We are somewhere in Heaven. It is so far to go. You know the price of gasoline these days.' Is that what he is saying to You?" And then the

supreme moment comes and he says, "*Jagamele, Paramatma ...*" "If You, the Paramatma, who are the Supreme Court of Appeal, if You deny me justice, to which higher court can I appeal? Please come and save me!" This is the meaning of this song. It is in the raga *Abheri*, and the tala is the same 4/4 time: 4 plus 2 plus 2, also in a slower tempo.

Song

I shall sing another piece by Tyagaraja. It is a very short piece in the raga called *Bhavdhari*. And in the song Tyagaraja says, "In this whole world, for you, Rama, to save this little Tyagaraja, this little me, is this so difficult for You? At the time of the churning of the ocean of milk, in order to get the nectar, the story is that the devas and asuras used Vasuki, the giant serpent, as the rope. But when you put the churn inside the ocean, of course it sinks, so they needed a platform. And the Lord appeared in the form of *Kurmavatara*, the second of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, and provided a platform for the mountain Meru to be used as the churn. This is the tradition at any rate. Tyagaraja says, "In order to provide a platform for these devas, for these celestials, you made yourself into *Kurmavatara*. Because it was raining one day in Mathura, as Krishna you lifted the Govardhana mountain with your little finger to provide an umbrella for these milkmaids." Tyagaraja asks "What would have happened if they had got wet? You raised the mountain in order to be able to save them from getting wet. For a person such as you, is it so difficult to save this little Tyagaraja?" This is the meaning of the song.

And you will find that when he says, “Did you not raise the mountain in order to save the milkmaidens from getting wet?” that the music also soars with the song.

Song

I will sing another piece by Tyagaraja. This is a very well-known song, although it is sung in different ways by different people. But I learned to sing this in the raga called *Devamrutavarshini*. And the words of this song are, “How did the elite amongst men worship You? What did they determine You to be? Did they decide that You are Shiva, or Madhava, which is Vishnu, or Brahma, the Lord of Saraswati, or did they decide that You are Paramabrahman, the Supreme Being?” And then he goes on to say, “In the Shiva mantram, *Aum Namahsivaya*, the key letter is *Ma*, the second letter. In the Vishnu mantram, *Aum namo Narayanaya*, the key letter is *Ra*. Now if you take the *Ra* from *Aum namo Narayanaya* and the *Ma* from *Aum Namahsivaya*, you get *Rama*. And that is how the name Rama came into being, and that is how the elite amongst men worshipped You.” This is the song I am going to sing for you.

Song

Time is passing but I cannot resist singing one more song by Tyagaraja. It is in the raga *Kapi* and it is also an unusual rhythmic pattern which we call *kandachapu*. And in this song again Tyagaraja blames himself for all the problems he is facing in this world, his inability to see Rama every day and

all the suffering he is undergoing at that time. He says, "It is all my fault. It is not any fault of Yours. It is all my fault that I am suffering like this."

Song

I shall end with two pieces, one by Syamasastri and the other by Dikshitar. And you will notice that the pitch has changed. This *madhyama sruthi* is used when the raga in which we sing a song is called *Nishadantya* raga—that means it does not run the full gamut of two octaves but stops at one octave. In order not to sing too much in the lower register, you raise the pitch. You go to the fourth or *madhyama*.

Song

I will end with a piece by Dikshitar, beginning with the words, *Sri venugopala*. Dikshitar also describes the Lord as Sri Rukminilola and we have Rukmini playing for us, and her *lola* (husband) is over there in case you haven't met him before.

Song

Thank you very much.

Sri Chinmoy. We are extremely grateful to you, most revered brother Narasimhan. We are extremely grateful to you for your most soulful, most illuminating and most fulfilling songs. Your matchless selfless service to the soul and the body of the United Nations can only be felt and never be described, for it will always beggar description. Only the sincere seekers who are serving the United Nations know how selflessly you have been serving the United Nations. The length and the breadth of the world will always remain indebted to you, for you have and you are a genuine heart. Mother India and the entire world will always be proud of you. And we, the members of the United Nations shall always remain grateful to you with our heart of simplicity, sincerity and devotedness.



Sri Chinmoy offers Mr. Narasimhan a trophy and a garland for his exceptional service to the United Nations.





Sri Chinmoy presents Mrs. Narasimhan with a bouquet of flowers after the concert.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following questions were submitted to Sri Chinmoy by members of the Meditation Group.

Question: What is charity?

Sri Chinmoy: Charity is a form of giving. If we have ten dollars and we give five pennies, then we feel that we have done an act of charity. In charity, we give just a little, just a grain. Although we have a large quantity, we give just a portion of it and we feel that this is more than enough. We justify ourselves and say, "We have voluntarily given this little portion, but who has the right to tell us to give anything at all?"

There is a great difference between charity and self-offering. In the spiritual life, when we use the term self-offering, it means that we try to give what we have, unconditionally. What we have, we give to God or to mankind. Self-giving comes from the integral, entire being, but charity comes from an infinitesimal portion of our existence.

When we give something with charity, then we have a kind of inner feeling that the world will come to know of our kind action and appreciate and admire us. We tell others that we are giving something through charity, and then we wait like a beggar. Inwardly we try to see who is appreciating us or who is acknowledging our charity. So always there is some condition behind our gift.

Self-giving is a giving of the entire being: body, vital, mind, heart and soul. What we have and what we are, we are giving to the divine cause. This is the difference between charity and self-giving.

Charity is a form of self-giving, but this self-giving is only in a very, very limited measure. It is by no means complete self-giving. Complete self-giving comes only from the spiritual life, only when we have the capacity to identify ourselves with the infinite Light and the infinite Vast.

Question: Sometimes I feel hopeless and helpless.

Sri Chinmoy: You must never feel that you are hopeless. If you feel that you are hopeless, then I wish to say that you are worse than hopeless. And if you feel that you are helpless, then I wish to say that you are really helpless. At that time, I can't help you at all, and no one else can help you. You are *not* hopeless and helpless. You are God's child. From Delight you came into existence, in Delight you grow and at the end of your journey's close, into Delight you will retire. This is what you must feel.

Question: Why is darkness impermanent and light permanent?

Sri Chinmoy: Light is permanent precisely because our Source is all Light. We come from Light, in Light we grow and through Light we fulfil our inner task. God is the eternal Source and we are His children. God-realisation, the flood of infinite Light, is our birthright. The more we go deep within, the easier it becomes for us to realise that there is something within us which is everlasting. Right now we are enveloped by darkness because we have been sleeping for a few years or a few in-

carnations. But a day will come when the infinite Light will dawn in us and make us feel what we truly are. Since our Source is God, who is all Light, eventually we also have to grow into Light. It is the Creator who has created us and eventually we have to grow into His very Image.

What is Light? Light is Delight, and Delight means nectar. This nectar is immortal. In one of our *Upanishads* it is said that all human beings come into the world from Delight. Again, Delight is Light, God the Light. We grow in Delight, but we do not see or feel the Delight right now because we are living the surface life in the meshes of ignorance. But we shall continue to grow and, at the end of our journey's close, we shall again enter into the effulgence of Delight. We came from Delight, we grow in Delight and, at the end of our journey's close, we shall retire into Delight.

This experience of Delight we get only when we meditate. When we meditate, we get inner peace or peace of mind. Delight is visible, palpable and tangible only when we have peace of mind. Unfortunately, the modern, intellectual, doubting and sophisticated mind does not care for this kind of Light and Delight. It cries for outer information or it cries to achieve the Truth in its own way. But even while achieving the Truth, it negates the Truth. The mind sees the Truth for five seconds and then, when it is about to achieve the Truth, it doubts the possibility and potentiality of the Truth. Then who is the loser? It is the mind. But if we live in the heart or in the soul, which is within the heart, then we identify ourselves with the Light and immediately we become the Light. At that time there is no doubt; there is only a flood of certainty.

So if we can live in our inner existence even for

one minute a day, we will see Light and feel Light in abundant measure. When we feel Light, we will feel the possibility of growing into the effulgence of Light. Our inner sun, which is infinitely brighter than the physical sun, will dispel the ignorance-night of millennia. Let us try to go deep within and enter into our inner sun, our cosmic sun. There we shall see the infinite, permanent Light waiting for us and crying for us. It needs only our conscious approval and co-operation to come to the fore.

Question: What is the meaning of struggle in the spiritual life? Will it lead to the destruction of our divine qualities?

Sri Chinmoy: Each individual has to realise what real struggle is. Real struggle, for a sincere spiritual seeker, is the struggle to conquer ignorance in his own life and in the world around him. If he is sincerely struggling to conquer himself, to be the ruler of his own life, then in his very effort he is bound to get joy. If he is sincerely struggling against falsehood, inertia, darkness, imperfection, limitation and bondage, then he is bound to feel a kind of inner joy.

Again, "struggle" is a very complicated word. If a lazy person has to budge an inch, then he feels that it is a great struggle. When we use the term "struggle," we have to know how hard we are trying to realise the Highest; we have to know how many minutes a day we are consecrating to the Supreme in us, how hard we are struggling to see the light within us and within others. If we are making a sincere struggle, then our divine qualities are bound to increase, for it is the divine qualities within us that are inspiring us to fight against

teeming ignorance. So how can they desert us when it is they who have asked us to fight? If we are sincerely struggling to conquer the dark forces in our lives, then we are not going to lose our inner divine qualities. On the contrary, our inner qualities will increase in boundless measure.

Question: I have heard that in three hundred years the human body will be as different from the way we know it now as we are different from the animal. Can you speak on this?

Sri Chinmoy: Neither you nor I will be alive in three hundred years. So, why worry about three hundred years from now? We see how little progress we have made in three thousand or four thousand years, so how can we expect to be perfect in three hundred years? It is not possible for that kind of progress to be made in three hundred years; it is simply absurd. In order to make progress, we must have tremendous devoted love. God knows how many years it will take: perhaps three million years. Thinking about these things does not help you; it only feeds your curiosity. What is happening in your present life is what is important. As a seeker, you must think only of your immediate progress: today's progress and tomorrow's progress.

Question: Could you speak on guidance?

Sri Chinmoy: We all need guidance. The body is our guide; the vital is our guide; the mind is our guide; the heart, which has more knowledge than the other members, is our guide; and the soul, which has infinitely more knowledge and wisdom

than the other members, is our inner guide. If you want to make a comparison, you can say that the vital offers a little more guidance than the body, the mind offers more guidance than the vital and the body put together, and the heart's guidance far exceeds the guidance of the body, vital and mind. Again, the light of the soul offers infinitely more guidance than all the others put together. Here on earth, millions of people are guided by the body, millions are guided by the vital and the mind. We get the guide that is most accessible to us until we can get the soul or God as our supreme guide.

Question: How can we bring our dreams into our meditation?

Sri Chinmoy: If you have very happy and delightful dreams, then they may encourage you and inspire you to meditate. Again, it may happen that after you have a dream you will go on imagining all that happened in your dream, even during your meditation. You will say to yourself, "I saw a beautiful Golden Shore." Then you will be there all the time and your real inner cry will not come to the fore. Many times people have had very high dreams and tried to remain there, but then the real intensity of their meditation went away. Again, it also may happen that when you have an inspiring dream, you feel that the Golden Shore is not a dream but a reality. So you say, "Let me work very hard."

When you meditate, you don't have to think of your dreams at all; just meditate most sincerely so that you can go high, higher, highest. This is the positive way. In this way it is not necessary to bring your dreams into your meditation at all.

Question: How can I have good dreams?

Sri Chinmoy: What you can do is this. If you normally get up at five o'clock, then get up at four o'clock. Take a proper shower and then meditate for half an hour at least. Then after meditation, sit down or lie down and concentrate on your navel. Do not think of dreams at that time. Try to feel that your navel chakra is opening. Try to imagine that a wheel is there rotating very fast. Because you have meditated for half an hour, you don't have to worry if you enter into that chakra, even though it is the vital chakra. From there you will get dynamic dreams or beautiful, soulful, colourful dreams. If you concentrate on other centres also you will get dreams. But be careful, so that you don't get carried away by the dreams.

Let us say that at five-thirty your meditation is over, and at six-thirty you have to get up again to go to school. So only one hour is at your disposal. But the navel chakra works very fast when it is invoked. If this chakra and the ones below the navel open too soon, then it is a real curse. But if they are opened at the proper time, then there is no difficulty.

Question: Will sweet dreams fulfil us?

Sri Chinmoy: When we get sweet dreams, we are never fulfilled, never fulfilled. But if it is God in us that dreams, if the divine in us dreams, then reality is going to be manifested immediately in us.

Question: Could you speak on Grace?

Sri Chinmoy: God has various kinds of power, but His most powerful adamant power is His Grace. The moment He uses His Grace for a seeker, He offers His very Life-Breath to the seeker.

God and God's Grace can never be separated. The divine Grace is constantly descending upon us. He who is aspiring sincerely is consciously aware of this divine Grace, whereas he who is not aspiring is keeping his heart's door permanently closed to the divine Grace.

If we approach God through His Grace, then we are more successful. When we think of God, if we immediately feel that God is Grace within and without, then we will find it easier to approach God. The moment we think of God's Grace, we feel that His infinite Peace, Light and Bliss are already in the process of entering into us. But if we think of God as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, then His divine qualities we do not see flowing through us. When we think of God as Grace, then all His divine, infinite qualities we feel entering into us. At that time, they become part and parcel of our inner and outer life.

From now on, let us feel that it is through the Grace of God that we can go to God, not that by going to God we are going to have His Grace. Here is a subtle difference. Let us think of God's Grace, which is constantly flowing, and let the flow carry us into the Source.

LETTERS FROM THE RIVERDALE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Earlier in the spring Dr. and Mrs. Myint-U, son-in-law and daughter of the late Secretary-General U Thant, invited members of the U.N. Meditation Group to give an assembly programme at the Riverdale Country School, which the Myint-U's children attend. The programme consisted of instructive and entertaining instrumental performances by several of the Group's musicians as well as a surprise ending with Ashrita the Magician, who has dazzled audiences at many of the Group's benefits for UNICEF. The Principal conveyed his appreciation to the Meditation Group through the Myint-U's, and sent along as well the sincere and charming expressions of gratitude from some of the students. Reprinted here are these letters.

RIVERDALE COUNTRY SCHOOL
WEST 253rd ST. & FIELDSTON ROAD
BRONX, NEW YORK 10471

HEAD OF THE LOWER SCHOOL

March 14, 1978

Dear Dr. + Mrs. Hyint-U,

Thank you so very much for arranging the marvelous assembly program. As I am sure you were aware, the children were intrigued and enjoyed the performances immensely.

The magician and musicians are indeed talented individuals who have developed a most interesting and entertaining combination of skills.

Again, let me express my sincere thanks and appreciation for your support of and interest in our school and children.

Most sincerely,
A. Barry Bryan

P.S. Please extend my heartfelt thanks, on behalf of myself and the students, to the meditation group.

Mar. 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group

I think the rabbit was cute

I loved every bit of magic.

The instruments were wonderful.

from,

Ava Isaacs

March 14, 1978

Dear UN. Meditation Group.

Thank you for coming.

Do you know what I liked,
I liked everything, but the best was
when the Easter Bunny appeared!

Deirdre Nachamie

Sincerely,

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group

Thank you for coming
to visit. I liked ~~it~~ very much.

I liked when you flattened
the bird. And I liked the
music.

From,

David
Morris

March 4 1978

Dear U.N Meditation Group,
I loved the music. And the instruments
were interesting. The magician was great.
from
Matthew Dietz

March 14, 1978

Dear UN. Meditation Group
Thank you for coming to
visit. I liked the musicians and the
magician.

From,
Hadley Hudson

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Groups

Thank you for coming
to visit.

You are a great Musicians.

You are very very very very good.

And the magician man is good.

I like it because it was interesting.

I like the magician man because he
did very very very very good tricks.

From.

Brian Stone.

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group,

Thank you for coming.

I liked the musicians and the
magician.

from,

Keli Rosenberg

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group,

Thank you for coming to visit.

What I thought was nice was the musicians
They were so interesting!! The magician was funny
and did terrific tricks.

Sincerely,

David Bernstein

March, 14, 1978

Dear UN Meditation group,
Thank you for performing
the show.

I like the instruments.

I liked the magician

I enjoyed it very much

and I hope you come
again.

from,

Elizabeth Stewart

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group.

I really enjoyed the show.

I thought the music you played
was fantastic and the magician
did really tricky tricks.

the end

from,

Christopher Russell

March. 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group,
Thank you for coming to
visit us.

I liked the musicians and the
magician with the jokes,

from,

Jeffrey-Rivera

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group,

Thank you for coming.

You played the instruments very well.

The magician was good, but
he didn't make the rabbit appear
until the end

From,
Chryssanthe Ganiaris

March. 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation
Group. I like the
magician when he
made the bird and
the rabbit and
I saw the string
that came out
of his mouth
from Monica Jones

March 14, 1978

Dear U.N. Meditation Group,

Thank you for coming.

I liked the magician very much. The songs were beautiful. I enjoyed the whole show.

Sincerely,

Andrew Nicholson



Ashrita the magician charms children and teachers alike (photo: Lewis Kahn).



Students enjoy instrumental performances by members of the Meditation Group (photo: Lewis Kahn).



Mrs. Aye Aye Myint-U with the Riverdale Country School Principal and faculty and members of the Group (photo: Lewis Kahn).

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