

# Meditation at the United Nations

United Nations:



the Heart-Home  
of the World-Body

Monthly Bulletin of  
Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations

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# MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF  
SRI CHINMOY MEDITATION  
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Since January, 1973, Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations 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.

*Editor:* Gail Silver

*Assistant:* Merri Weisbrot

*For information please write:*

Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations  
GPO 20 — Room 1931  
United Nations, New York 10017

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## SRI CHINMOY MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

United Nations:



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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

*Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations 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 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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## APHORISMS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

BY SRI CHINMOY

The League of Nations was a dream-seed. The United Nations is a reality-plant. The aspiring and serving life of man's universal oneness will be the eternity-tree.

\*

The goal of the United Nations lies not only in thinking together, but in thinking alike.

\*

At the end of its voyage, there is every possibility that the United Nations will be the last word in human perfection.

\*

The soul-love of the United Nations is life-examination, life-improvement and life-perfection.

\*

The soul-love of the United Nations teaches us three most important things: patience, expansion and oneness.

\*

Each nation is great. The greatness of each nation lies in its deep love for other nations and in its self-giving to other nations.

\*

If each nation values self-criticism when it is at home, then perfection-sun will not remain a far cry.

\*

Each nation is a petal of a flower, an inner rose, an inner lotus.

\*

Each nation is like a note in a song. If one note is not properly sung, then the entire song is ruined.

\*

Each nation has the capacity to fulfil all nations through self-giving, and this self-giving is nothing other than God-becoming.

\*

Here at the United Nations, each nation shall offer its illumining capacities and fulfilling qualities to all the other nations.

\*

You as a nation— aspiring nation, searching nation, crying nation, illumining nation— can fulfil the Dream of God on earth.

\*

Talking, lecturing and advising the world can never be an adequate answer to world-despair. The most effective answer to world-despair lies in self-giving.

\*

The United Nations embodies both Heaven's Vision and earth's reality.

\*

The United Nations is not a thing to appreciate, admire or adore. Rather, it is the way, the way of oneness, that leads us to the Supreme Oneness.

\*

The United Nations is the way that wants to lead the world to the destined Goal, where Light and Delight reign supreme.

\*

The United Nations is a real mother, and the world is like a child in front of it.

\*

The world is blind; it needs God-Vision. And the United Nations has God-Vision in abundant measure.

\*

All nations are pilgrims, eternal pilgrims, walking along the same road, the road of Eternity.

\*

If a nation feels that its progress will be slow if it helps a weak one, I wish to say that this is not true.

\*

Unless and until we become inseparably one with the ideals of the United Nations, we can never be happy and fulfilled.

\*

Millions of people can meet together, but if there is no soul's bond, no soul's unity, then all nations will prove to be veritable beggars.

\*

The soul of the United Nations has to be accepted by all nations, and only then will a sense of completeness, perfection and satisfaction be attained.

\*

Each individual being, each man and woman, should feel that he belongs not to his own nation, but to all nations.

\*

The United Nations is the seed. World union is the fruit. Both are equally important; both are of supreme importance.

\*

The United Nations is the morning. World union is the day.

\*

## SRI LANKA DAY CELEBRATED

*Sri Lanka's national day was celebrated 4 February 1981 by the meditation group, with H.E. Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, serving as guest speaker. An excellent film on Ananda Coomaraswamy, an authority on the art of Sri Lanka and India, was also shown. Following are excerpts from Ambassador Fonseka's talk.*



*H.E. Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations: Sri Chinmoy, friends of the meditation group, friends of Sri Lanka, I am grateful to Sri Chinmoy and those members of the meditation group who*

have organised this function here today to mark the national day, the Independence Day of Sri Lanka. As you might know, Sri Lanka celebrates today the 33rd anniversary of its independence. Perhaps this is not quite the occasion for me to give you a resume of Sri Lanka's history. We are not much different from a large number of the countries which constitute the membership of the United Nations. We were an independent country. We went through that rather common period of colonial rule, and we resumed our independence in 1948. We were admitted to the membership of the United Nations in December 1955 and in the 26 years that have elapsed we, like many of the small countries that today constitute the very substantial membership of the United Nations, have tried, to the best of our ability, to adhere, to contribute to the objectives for which this organisation was formed in 1945.

The assessment of that contribution is not really for us to make. There are certain constraints or limitations on what any country can contribute to the U.N. Those constraints are understandably even greater when it comes to the smaller countries of the United Nations. Nevertheless, this organisation remains the only body in which all the countries of the world—irrespective of their size, their wealth and their power—can make their impact felt; can exercise their influence, however small or great that might be.

The policy that the Government of Sri Lanka has followed in its relations with other states over the years is one that seeks friendship with all. You might say that this is an objective that no other country denies, but we try to give some content to that policy in the overall outlook we take, in the positions we adopt in the various forums of the

U.N. From time to time we have been able to play a role which we hope has been of use or value to different countries of the Organisation, especially to the countries of our region. In the years before us that will remain our objective.

This year, 1981, is of rather great significance to us as a country, not only as a member of the U.N. but also in another sphere which I have no doubt will be of interest to you. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of universal adult franchise in Sri Lanka. Since then, in 1959, we lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. As a result of the introduction of universal adult franchise, we have had a system of government under which there are regular elections. If any evidence is required as to the validity of those elections, of the seven national elections which we have held since 1931, the people changed the government in five of those elections. I emphasise this because the system of democracy is something which the members of the U.N. regard as important. That is the basis on which the main body of the U.N., the General Assembly, functions.

We will now see a film about one of the great Sri Lankans, Ananda Coomaraswamy. He was not somebody who was in the political realm. He was a man of scholarship, who delved deeply into the history and culture of his own country, and went beyond to look into the history and culture of the people of that whole subcontinent and area. As often happens, a prophet is not recognised in his own country. It was not that we failed to recognise him, but rather that the priorities or preoccupations of our people at that time did not allow him to be given the recognition which he deserved. As a consequence, he came to this country where he pursued his study into the culture and history of the people of that part of the world.

## U.N. DIPLOMATS HONOUR PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

*The international diplomatic community honoured Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Illueca at a U.N. ceremony sponsored by the meditation group on 17 February 1981. Dr. Illueca has been associated with the U.N. since the second General Assembly in 1947, serving as Permanent Representative of Panama for six years until his appointment as Foreign Minister. During his term, the Panama Canal treaties were signed and his country was elected to a seat on the Security Council. Ambassadors Rossides of Cyprus, Fonseka of Sri Lanka and Muwamba of Malawi, and Sri Chinmoy spoke in honour of Illueca. Following are excerpts from the programme.*

*Ambassador Zenon Rossides, Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations:* I am very pleased to be here on this occasion in order to express our congratulations to Ambassador Illueca for his worthy promotion to Foreign Minister of Panama. Ambassador Illueca is a distinguished figure, not only for his ability as a diplomat, but above all for his character. What we need today in the United Nations and in the world is character—the ability to stand for what is right and not for what is pleasant to others, the ability to do what is right and to do it with the grace, the good will and the kindness that Ambassador Illueca has shown in his work.



There is no doubt that the political abilities of Ambassador Illueca will be praised in the United Nations, where he is recognised by all for his dignity and his ability to bring forward what is right. What we need in the United Nations and in the world is a forthright spirit such as his, which says that the United Nations has to conform with the Charter if it is going to be what it is meant to be: the instrument of international security and peace. If we don't conform with the Charter, we cannot expect the United Nations to do anything truly worthy in the world. It may do a lot of things incidentally and it has already achieved much. It is indeed indispensable. But it has failed to maintain international security and peace because chapter seven of the Charter has not been applied. This is the great problem of the world today. We are paying today for that original sin of violating the Charter in its very pith and marrow and every day that passes brings us nearer to the danger of a conflagration.

Knowing Ambassador Illueca's mind and his forthrightness, it is encouraging to know that he is going to be Foreign Minister of Panama. This will be to the service not only of his country, but also to the whole of Latin America and, by reflection, to the whole world. Ambassador Illueca is a man of the spirit. The intellect has developed space travel and the nuclear bomb, but the intellect can go wrong. It does not go wrong with Ambassador Illueca, however, because he is also a spiritual man. The spirit is our link with the universal mind and the moral flow of the universe. We have to develop the spirit of man if we want to have the prospect of survival in our present predicament. Therefore, in congratulating Ambassador Illueca I am doing nothing more than expressing what is in the best interest of the entire world.

*H.E. Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations:* Sri Chinmoy, members of the meditation group, my dear colleagues, Foreign Minister Illueca, I need hardly say that it is a recognition of the great qualities, the performance and the acceptability of Foreign Minister Illueca to have been called by his government to head its Foreign Ministry.

I would like to refer to just two events which took place during Ambassador Illueca's term of office here. The first was historical in that during his term of office his country resumed sovereignty over the Panama Canal Zone. I need not tell this gathering how important an occasion this was, especially that this problem was settled bilaterally and in a spirit of peace and compromise, to which I am sure Ambassador Illueca contributed greatly. It was an indication of the state of relations between a great country, the United States, and another important country, Panama, that they were able to settle this. It happened during Ambassador Illueca's time, and I think it is a great credit to him personally that it took place.

The second is an event that demonstrated the standing that his country has in the international community, in the United Nations and certainly in the Latin American group. Here I refer to the somewhat protracted exercise we went through during the last General Assembly to elect a member of the Latin American group to the Security Council. That Panama and its representative provided an acceptable choice from the Latin American group to be a member of the Security Council is a tribute to Panama and to Ambassador Illueca. Thank you very much.

*H.E. Mr. T.J.X. Muwamba, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the United Nations:* Your excellencies and friends, since my arrival at the U.N. more than five years ago, I have been one person who has admired Foreign Minister Illueca from the very day that I walked into the great edifice of the United Nations. And I would like to testify publicly, just as his government has acknowledged publicly, the effective and positive stewardship which he has displayed here. If we have had here at the United Nations a man whom you might brand as a silent diplomat, that man is Ambassador Illueca. We have had several explosive issues to contend with here, and wherever we involved Ambassador Illueca, we were sure of coming up with a compromise of some kind. The man worked tirelessly; the man worked silently, but very effectively. We came to love him; we came to admire him. When word reached me that, in fact, his own government had recognised his effectiveness and therefore had decided to appoint him as Foreign Minister, I thought to myself that the United Nations is once again on the move. For it is clear that Ambassador Illueca is a child of the United Nations who believes fully in what the United Nations stands for.

Therefore, I would like to salute you, sir, and your good lady, who sits beside you and will continue to sit beside you in your new job. There you will reflect the aspirations of the international community that you represented here. With the problems that we have in the developing world, I am certain that you will play your role as effectively, if not much more effectively, than you have done here, with the experience that you have obtained here. Your good lady will be there to remind you constantly that you are not working

only for yourself, you are not working only for Panama, but you are working for the family of man.

We want to wish you very well and we will continue to give you our moral support, wherever we may be. We thank you for the excellent job that you have already done. Thank you.

*H.E. Dr. Jorge Illueca, Foreign Minister of Panama:* Sri Chinmoy, Ambassador Rossides, Ambassador Fonseka, Ambassador Muwamba, friends and colleagues, my heartfelt thanks to you all for your generous words. With all humility, I have accepted to participate in this programme with the understanding that the honour bestowed upon my country and my person would be, as it is, a spiritual bridge to honour Sri Chinmoy as the founder and inspiring force of Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations. As a human being, I am deeply indebted to Sri Chinmoy and to my friends of the meditation group. They have opened new horizons for my mind and they exercise, in the environment of the United Nations family, a positive influence on human and international relations as a whole. With them life is like the sky, since they put love, peace and justice in it, words that are bread and wine for our souls.

When I said that I am today a spiritual bridge to honour Sri Chinmoy, it is because this eminent philosopher has given new dimensions to the ideas proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. He has moved the kind feelings of many men and women of all ages in a most constructive manner. Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations is a

magnificent evidence of his endeavours in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Perhaps the best way to say thank you to Sri Chinmoy and this meditation group is to realise that they serve as an organisation to promote the principles of friendship and cooperation that are essential to have peace and good neighbourliness between states and individuals.

The Constitution of UNESCO states that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." To this noble idea, Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations has been committed. Its members have dedicated themselves to constantly promoting peace, tolerance, understanding, friendship and cooperation, without demanding any compensation in return. They are friends of humanity who have found a place in our hearts and in our minds and give us more than a single kindness, something that is impossible to define, but shall always be shining in our souls.

Thank you.



*Foreign Minister Illueca receives a trophy from Sri Chinmoy as Mrs. Illueca and Ambassadors Hepburn of the Bahamas and Muwamba of Malawi look on.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Sri Chinmoy answered the following questions at meetings of the meditation group.*

*Question:* How can we remember to forgive the world for its defects and to forgive ourselves for our own defects?

*Sri Chinmoy:* On rare occasions we see imperfections in ourselves, but we always see imperfections in others. Now, when we discover that we are imperfect or have done something wrong, what do we do? We forgive ourselves immediately, or we ignore the fact that we have done something wrong, or we decide to turn over a new leaf and never do it again. We do all these in order to get satisfaction.

If others do something wrong, if we don't forgive them, if we harbour undivine thoughts against them or want to punish them, we will never find true satisfaction. In order to satisfy ourselves, our reality, we must forgive others, too. Forgiveness is illumination. We have to feel that by forgiving others we are illuminating ourselves, our own enlarged, expanded Self.

If we do not forgive, what happens? We place a heavy load on our shoulders. If I have done something wrong and I don't try to forgive myself or illumine myself, I will harbour the idea that I have made a mistake. And each time I think of my wrong action I will only add to my heavy load of

guilt. Similarly, if others have done me an act of injustice, the more I think of this the heavier becomes my load of anger and resentment. Now, I have to run towards my goal. If I place something heavy on my shoulders, how am I going to run? I will see that others are all running very fast, while I can hardly walk.

It is always advisable to forgive others and to forgive oneself. Again, we have to know who is forgiving whom. I as an individual have no right to forgive others or even to forgive myself. It is the Divine within me that is inspiring me to raise my consciousness to light, to higher light, to highest light. An act of forgiveness means a movement to a higher reality. And when we reach the highest Reality, we become one with the omnipresent Reality.

We are all integral parts of a living organism. If I have only two arms, I am incomplete; I need two legs, too. I need everything in order to be complete, perfect and whole. So I have to accept others as my very own. First I accept them and then I transform them. And whom am I transforming if not my own expanding, enlarged reality?

*Question:* Could you speak about the need for individuals to defend themselves?

*Sri Chinmoy:* Before you defend yourself you have to know whether you have done the right thing or not. If you have done something wrong, it will be a mistake to try to defend and justify yourself. If you have done something wrong, you have to pray for forgiveness to the Supreme in the individual who has been the victim of your wrong ac-

tion. But if you are doing something right and if you are misunderstood or criticised or attacked, then you will try to defend yourself. If you are attacked, you should always try to be calm, quiet and tranquil within. Peace is the greatest strength; if you have inner peace, then you have a lion's strength.

Since you follow the spiritual life and are devoted to love, truth and God, you will not exploit anybody. But if somebody wants to exploit you or harm you in any way, you have to protect yourself. Spirituality is not the same thing as stupidity. You have to be wise. There is no wisdom in surrendering to circumstances and saying, "I am helpless, what can I do?" There is no wisdom in remaining silent and waiting for the person who is harming you to reap the karma of his action if you yourself have the power to take action. How do you know that God wants you to give that person an opportunity to continue committing wrong acts? That person has deceived you or done something harmful to you, and God has awakened you so that you are aware of it. So it is your bounden duty to defend yourself.

This is called a sincere approach to reality. If you remain silent, the other person will go on exploiting you. His ignorance will increase and he will never open to the light, and he will not give you a chance to open to the light either. You will be continually at his mercy, and your own sense of justice will disappear.

To be sincere is to defend one's inner cause. To be sincere is to breathe in divine qualities and breathe out undivine qualities. To be sincere is to see the truth as it is, on its own level, and to utilise the truth in its own way. When a new divine



thought dawns, you try to execute it, and use it to build a castle of truth.

But ignorance cleverly comes into our mind and tells us to wait, since Eternity is at our disposal. If we listen to ignorance, we are not defending truth. Truth needs immediate recognition and acceptance. We accept the truth and we try to manifest the truth. Let us live the divine truth. In living the truth we will be justifying our own existence. By living the truth, we will be accepting our own inner Immortality, which is our birthright.

*Question:* How long should one meditate?

*Sri Chinmoy:* It depends on the individual seeker. One athlete may practise running for half an hour while there may be another who can run for only two or three minutes. In the spiritual life also it depends on how far the seeker has advanced. There is no hard and fast rule. We should continue to meditate as long as we can do it soulfully and devotedly. But if we meditate beyond our capacity, we will get headaches and have serious problems. Someone might force himself to meditate for twenty-four hours, but what kind of meditation will it be if he does not have the capacity? This will not bring about any satisfactory result.

The best thing is to meditate as long as we can without creating any mental disturbance or any difficulty in our spiritual life. It depends entirely on the capacity of the seeker. It is like developing a muscle. Today we may exercise and become tired after five minutes. After ten days we develop our muscles and we can exercise for half an hour or even more. In the spiritual life there is a spiritual

muscle. This spiritual muscle is our inner intensity, our aspiration. How long and how sincerely we can cry for God is our inner muscle.

*Question:* How can I start meditating in the heart right from the beginning without going through the mind first?

*Sri Chinmoy:* You must direct your full, intense concentration on the heart. You must feel that you are not the mind. You have to feel that you are growing into the heart. You are only the heart and nothing else.

*Question:* When I am meditating, sometimes I have trouble distinguishing whether what I feel is my mind imagining my heart or whether it is really my heart.

*Sri Chinmoy:* If it is your real heart, then you will get a sense of satisfaction, pure satisfaction. If it is the mind you may also get satisfaction, but immediately you will also get something else and that something else is doubt. Your experience will be attacked by other thoughts: "How can I have this kind of satisfaction? I am so bad, I am so impure, I am so ignorant. This morning I told a lie and yesterday I did something very wrong, so I cannot have this kind of satisfaction." When that kind of idea comes, then you will know that your experience was from the mind. When you get an experience with the mind, you may temporarily feel very happy, delighted. But you won't be able

to establish your identification with what the mind has seen or felt or realised.

But once you get an experience from the heart, immediately you feel your oneness with it. When you see something with the heart, you get joy and immediately you are one with it. When you see a flower with your mind, you appreciate and admire it. But when you see it with your heart, immediately you feel either that your heart is inside the flower or that the flower is inside your heart. So when you have an experience and feel a kind of satisfaction, if you feel that you are one with the experience itself, then you will know that it is from the heart. But if you feel that the experience is something outside you that you are achieving, then it is from the mind.

*Question:* How can one discipline the mind during meditation?

*Sri Chinmoy:* It is only during meditation that you get the opportunity to discipline the mind. When you are not in meditation you will see that each thought or idea is composed of words. If you enter into an idea you will see that it is formulated with words. Words come and form a sentence either inside or outside your mind and there you get an idea. But during deep meditation, you do not need words to form an idea. There the idea comes in a flash in the form of light, or light will bring the idea right in front of your vision. At that time you will immediately see the incident or truth that you want to envision in your life.

How can you discipline your mind during meditation? You can discipline the mind only by forget-

ting the existence of the mind and feeling that you do not have a mind. You may think, "If I do not have a mind, then how can I exist? I will become an idiot without a mind." But I tell each and every one of my disciples that the mind you get from books, the mind you utilise while conversing with people, the mind you require in order to exist on earth, cannot take you even an inch towards God-realisation.

During meditation if you can really make yourself feel that you have only the heart, or if you can feel that you do not even have the heart, but that your whole existence from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head is the soul, then you will see that the mind does not exist. But if you cannot feel the presence of your soul, you can easily feel your heart's presence and your heart's glow. When you see light glowing in the heart or in the soul, you can rest assured that you have already transcended the intellectual mind. At this stage you have entered into the illumined mind, which is very different from the reasoning, intellectual mind.\*

When the light grows in the heart or the light comes out of the soul and permeates the entire body, at that time the mind is automatically disciplined. If you want to discipline the mind by hope, it is impossible. It is like straightening the tail of a dog. But if you can live in the soul or even in the heart, then the light of the inner existence either transforms the physical mind and brings it into the higher regions, or it brings down the all-fulfilling peace from above into the gross physical mind. When peace descends or the mind ascends into the higher domain of light, at that time the mind automatically disappears.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST  
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA TO THE UNITED NATIONS



630 THIRD AVENUE (20th FLOOR)  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

5 February 1981

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the work and efforts which you and Mr. Kevin Keefe undertook to arrange a programme at the Meditation Centre on the occasion of Sri Lanka's National Day. May I also through you convey my thanks to the young ladies and well-wishers who joined in the singing of a musical tribute to Sri Lanka and our National Anthem. I am most indebted to all of you.

Yours sincerely,

/s/

I. B. Fonseka  
Permanent Representative

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