

SRI CHINMOY ON HIS WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

An Excerpt from an interview by LE MONDE
Paris, September 1984

LE MONDE: Since 1970 you have been the director of a meditation group at the United Nations. What is its purpose? What type of issues do you deal with? What type of people come to see you there? And for what reason?

SRI CHINMOY: We feel that the political life and the spiritual life must go together, since politics needs continuous prayer and meditation in order to change the face of the earth and bring about not only a peace-loving world but also a peace-flooded world.

I serve the United Nations, along with my students who work there, by offering silent meditation and spiritual talks. I also seek to inspire the various nations by appreciating the gifts that they have offered to the outer world and the inner world.

At our meetings, ambassadors, delegates, U.N. executives and staff share with us their spiritual, political, national and international values. In this way we bring to the fore the best in each other from the depths of our hearts.

LE MONDE: You first accept the society which you want to transform. This is a very realistic attitude, rarely to be found among spiritual masters. But how will you come out of this compromise: accept and, at the same time, transform? And how do you expect to transform the world?

SRI CHINMOY: In the beginning we try to bring forward the good qualities of society and give very little importance to its shortcomings. Once the good qualities of society are increased and strengthened, they will be in a position to transform and illumine the bad qualities of society.

We feel that although the preparation of the collective is absolutely necessary for a better society, the first and foremost goal must be the perfection of the individual. The hope and fulfilment of individual perfection is the only thing that can transform and perfect the whole of society.

LE MONDE: Does inner peace remove the risks of war, or does it only allow one to withstand them?

SRI CHINMOY: The sincere hunger for world peace will be able to withstand even a world war. Again, if the inner world is inundated with peace, then the nightmare of world war cannot even come into being.