

*7 February 1957*

As an exception, Mother gave this talk on a Thursday evening, before the collective meditation.

Before the meditation this evening I am going to say a few words to you, because several people have asked me the difference between a collective meditation and an individual meditation.

Individual meditation — I have already explained to you many times the different kinds of meditation that are possible and I won't begin to speak to you about that again.

But collective meditations have been practised in all ages for different reasons, in different ways and with different motives. What may be called a collective meditation is a group of people who gather together for a definite purpose; for example, in all ages it has been a practice to gather for prayers. Naturally in the Churches, it is a sort of collective meditation but even outside the Churches, some people have organised collective meditations for group prayer. These prayers are of two different kinds.

From the beginning of human history, it is known that certain groups of people would meet to express a certain common state of soul: some to sing together the praise of God, hymns, thanksgiving, to express adoration, thankfulness, gratitude, and to praise God; others — and there are historical examples of this — a certain number of people gathered together for a common invocation, for instance, to ask God for something, and this was done all together, united, in the hope that this invocation, this prayer, this asking would carry more weight. There have been some very famous instances. A very old one occurred in 1000 A.D. when some prophets had announced that it was the end of the world and everywhere people gathered together to offer common prayers and ask that the world may not come to an end (!) or anyway, for it to be protected. Much more

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recently, in modern times, when King George of England was dying of pneumonia, people assembled in England, not only in the churches but even in the streets in front of the royal palace, to offer prayers and ask God to cure him. It so happened that he recovered, and they believed that it was their prayers.... That is, of course, the most external form, I could say the most worldly, of group meditation.

In all initiatory groups, in all the spiritual schools of ancient times, group meditation was always practised and in that case the motive was quite different. They assembled for a collective progress, to open together to a force, a light, an influence, and... this is more or less what we want to try to do.

However, there are two methods, and this is what I am going to explain to you. In both cases, one must practise as one does in individual meditation, that is, sit in a position at once comfortable enough for one to be able to keep it and yet not too comfortable for one to fall asleep in it! And then you do what I had asked you to do while I used to go for the distribution over there,<sup>1</sup> that is, prepare for the meditation, try to become calm and silent; not only to avoid chattering outwardly, but to try to silence your mind and gather your consciousness which is dispersed in all the thoughts you have and your preoccupations; to gather it, bring it back within yourself as completely as possible and concentrate it here, in the region of the heart, near the solar plexus, so that all the active energies in the head and all that keeps the brain running, may be brought back and concentrated here. This can be done in a few seconds, it can take a few minutes: that depends on each one. Well, this is a preparatory attitude. And then, once this is done—or done as well as you can do it—you may take two attitudes, that is, an active attitude or a passive attitude.

<sup>1</sup> Every evening, before meditation or the talks, Mother used to distribute groundnuts to the children of the “Green Group”, in the adjoining playground.

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What I call an active attitude is to concentrate on — I shall put it in general terms — on the person who is directing the meditation, with the will to open and receive from him what he intends to give you or the force with which he wants to put you into contact. That is active, for here there is a will at work and an active concentration to open yourself to someone, a concentration on someone.

The other one, the passive one is simply this: to be concentrated as I have told you, then you open yourself as one opens a door; you see, you have a door here (*gesture at the level of the heart*) and once you are concentrated, you open the door and stay like this (*gesture of immobility*). Or else, you may take another image, as if it were a book, and you open your book very wide with its pages completely blank, that is, quite silent, and you stay like that waiting for what is going to happen.

These are the two attitudes. You may take one or the other, according to the day, the occasion, or you may adopt one of them, out of preference, if it helps you more. Both are effective and can have equally good results.

And so, now, for our special case, I shall tell you what I am trying to do.... It will soon be a year since, one Wednesday, we had the manifestation of the supramental force. Since then, it has been working very actively, even while very few people are aware of it! but still I thought the time had come for — how to put it? — for us to help it a little in its work by making an effort of receptivity.

Of course, it does not work only in the Ashram, it is working in the whole world and in all places where there is some receptivity this Force is at work, and I must say the Ashram hasn't an exclusive receptivity in the world, the monopoly of receptivity. But since it so happens that all of us here more or less know what has taken place, well, I hope that individually each person is doing his best to benefit by the occasion; but collectively we can do something, that is, try to unify a ground,

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to produce a particularly fertile soil to obtain collectively the maximum receptivity and to have as little wastage as possible of time and energies.

So now, you have been told in a general way what we want to try to do and you have only to... to do it.