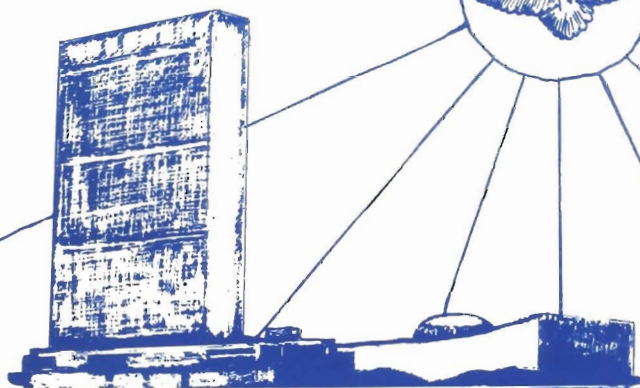


Meditation at the United Nations

United Nations:



the Heart-Home
of the World-Body



Monthly Bulletin of the
United Nations Meditation Group

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MEDITATION
AT THE
UNITED NATIONS

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE
UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP

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.

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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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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

Question: Could you tell me what should be my prayer to the Supreme?

Sri Chinmoy: Ask for your nature's perfection. All those who have accepted our path or who are following any spiritual path should have only one prayer - to be a perfect instrument of the Supreme.

Question: Does each person have a different way of meditating?

Sri Chinmoy: If you want peace, then you have to meditate on peace. If you want love, then you have to meditate on love. If you want joy or any other divine quality, the best thing is to meditate on it. That is the only way you can get these qualities. Each individual will have a different way of meditating because his mind or his heart will want different qualities. You will be knocking at a particular door and somebody else will be knocking at another door. Each one has his own way.

The general rule for my students is to knock at my heart's door. That is an absolutely general rule.

Once the door is open, if you want to go to the kitchen, you go. If you want to go to the living room, you go. If you want to go to my study, you go. If you want to go to the meditation room, you go. But the general rule is to open the door first and then select the room that you want to enter.

Question: Quite often I find that when I look at students who are standing in front of me and meditating, the peace that I felt before increases. Why is this?

Sri Chinmoy: You have peace and if you stand in front of a peaceful person, then naturally your peace will grow. You are not a thief, but if you stand in front of a thief or mix with him, then naturally the consciousness of the thief will enter into you. Similarly, if you stand in front of someone who has a good quality, then that good quality will enter into you.

Sometimes you don't have to stand in front of a person. Suppose you see a beautiful tree. Being an artist, a good artist, naturally you will appreciate and admire the beauty of the tree. Perhaps you will even try to sit at the foot of the tree and paint. But the moment you sit down, all the world's undivine thoughts, absolutely worst thoughts, may start entering into you. Then you will say, "Why is this happening to me? I came here with a pure mind only to paint, so how is it that all the world's absolutely undivine, impure thoughts are attacking me?" In this case, you have to know that somebody with a low character had previously sat under the tree and invited the lowest thoughts to enter into him.

Again, it may happen that a saint or a saintly person has sat at the foot of the tree and meditated for some time. Then you come and sit there and you get *his* vibration. It is not only the physical presence of the person that can affect you. Although his physical presence is no longer there, even the subtle presence of the person who was there before may affect you.

Sometimes, while you are walking along the street, you may find that you can't account for an experience that you suddenly get. Although there is no flower of any kind, absolutely none, still you get a beautiful, fragrant, flower-like feeling, which is very ethereal and divine. Where does this heavenly feeling come from? Either a spiritual person has been there or some angels or astral beings happen to be there.

So if you are in front of someone who has more capacity than you have, then his presence may help you to acquire more of that capacity. Although outwardly you are not begging him to give you anything and perhaps he also is not conscious of giving you anything, from his very presence you may get that capacity. If he is embodying intuition or any capacity or quality, then you get it. It is like a magnet: you are pulling the quality from him and it is entering into you. Sometimes if you are pulling from him outwardly, then the ego-world enters and he will not give you anything. But inwardly if you pull, then he will give.

Question: If someone is a sincere seeker, should he follow a specific path?

Sri Chinmoy Mine is not the only path; there are many paths. Today I have inspired you, but my only request to you is that you accept a path of your own. You should follow a specific path under the guidance of a spiritual Master if you really want to reach the Goal the fastest. Everyone here on earth cares for time. If you can reach your goal in one day, why should you wait for ten days?

The only thing is that in one day you cannot reach your spiritual goal. If anybody tells you that you will attain God-realisation in two hours or in ten days or in one month, then I wish to tell you that he is fooling you. Please do not go to that Master. God-realisation is not so easy. I know, because I have realised God. Nobody can realise God in one day or in one month. It is impossible. Just to get a Master's degree you need eighteen or twenty years of outer study. To attain God-realisation is infinitely more difficult than to get a Master's degree.

Again, you should not be doomed to disappointment. Do not think, "Oh, I will never realise God; I have done so many things wrong." You are God's child. You have gone through some experiences which you call mistakes. But if you feel that you will never realise God because you did a few things wrong in your life, then you are mistaken. God-realisation is your birthright. You have to forget those unhappy experiences. You must not commit those mistakes anymore. From today, if you always do the right thing in both your inner life and your outer life, then you are bound to realise God very soon.

So on the one hand, don't be disappointed, discouraged or disheartened; and on the other hand, don't be over-optimistic and think that in a few

weeks you will realise God. Everything has its own time. Slowly and steadily you will reach your goal. In the spiritual life you need aspiration: you need to practise concentration, meditation and contemplation. Then you will realise God. Please be sincere and serious in this matter. Then you will see that God-realisation is not something impossible; far from it. It is possible, practicable and inevitable. But you have to be sincere and follow a specific path. You have to have inner guidance and outer guidance from the Master whom you accept as your leader and guide.

Question: Could you speak a little about how a seeker who has just entered the spiritual life should handle the pleasures and problems of daily life?

Sri Chinmoy: Let us deal with problems first. First, you have to ask whether these problems, which right now you have, existed before? Immediately, the answer will come, yes. So how is it that now you are aware of them, and at that time you were not aware of them? You have to know that when you live an ordinary life, unaspiring life, the hostile forces are clever. They know that you are at their mercy. They know your capacity, that you are in ignorance and at their feet. So they say, "All right, since he is sleeping, let us not bother him." But the moment you are up, they are going to attack you. There are many seekers who complain to their Master, "Before we accepted the spiritual life, we had less problems. Now that we have accepted the spiritual life, our problems have increased." But it is not true. They must know that these prob-

blems they had; only they did not want to conquer them consciously. That's why they were not aware of them. If you don't want to conquer something, then you are fast asleep and the problem is fast asleep. But now that you have entered into the spiritual life, you are challenging all your problems. Since you are challenging the problems, the hostile forces stand with the problems. They feed the problems so that they can continue the fight. But these forces know that they will not be able to conquer you. Only they will try to delay, delay. So you have to challenge them.

Before you accepted the spiritual life, you thought that the life of ignorance, the life of pleasure, was the right life. You looked around and you saw that everybody was enjoying the life of pleasure. You said, "So what is wrong with me? If my friends, my neighbours, and everybody is in the same boat, then I don't want to be an exception." But once you accept the spiritual life, you feel that the life they're leading is not meant for you. You have got now an inner call, a higher call. You can't be with them. Yes, you stayed with them for fifteen years or twenty years. But now you have got a higher call. Now the time has come for you to follow something else, to do something else.

If you don't accept problems as such, how are you going to conquer them? You will try to avoid problems, and problems will come to you with more power. Most vehemently they will come and attack you. So you cannot hide from your problems. You have to conquer them here and now. If you wait and say, "No, tomorrow I will gain more strength, and then I will be able to conquer my problems," I tell you that tomorrow will not come.

Each second is a golden opportunity and if you misuse this golden opportunity, then you are strengthening unconsciously the forces of ignorance.

Now, about the life of pleasure. You have to know. "Have you received or achieved from the life of pleasure?" Immediately you will say, "The life of pleasure has given me one thing and that is frustration." Even if you remain in the ordinary life, the unaspiring life, if you are sincere then you will say, "All I have gained from this life of pleasure is frustration." And then what happens? You see that there is no hope of coming out of this frustration unless and until you are destroyed totally. What today we call frustration, tomorrow will be destruction. We started our journey with temptation. Then, in temptation there was pleasure. And inside pleasure is destruction. After destruction, what remains? Nothing. This is the negative way of proceeding.

Then there is a positive way. That positive way is aspiration. What is aspiration? Aspiration is the inner cry that makes us feel that we have come from the infinite Peace, Light and Bliss and that we still embody this infinite Peace, Light and Bliss. Only we have to bring these qualities to the fore. Now, unconsciously we have it. Unconsciously, we have someone called God. But spiritual life means our conscious awareness of God.

You have the treasure within you, but you have misplaced it. When you misplace something, you search for it, but you may not find it immediately. So you ask your friend, your dearest friend, to help you search: "I have lost something. Will you search for it along with me?" The friend comes, and since

he is more expert in finding things, he finds it for you. That friend is your spiritual Master. Once he finds it, he does not take it away from you. He will not dare to take it away from you just because he has found it on your behalf. A spiritual Master is like that. He finds your inner treasure for you, and then his role is over. Your role is only to thank him. He finds it for you; then it becomes your treasure. You just thank him.

The life of pleasure has to be replaced by the life of aspiration. In aspiration is the real treasure, the realisation that you come from the Infinite, that you are in the Infinite and that you are for the Infinite Truth and Light.

Each person has a friend and an enemy. If the person aspires, then he feels that desire is his enemy and aspiration is his friend. If he does not aspire, if he is leading a life of desire, then he feels that desire is his friend and aspiration is his enemy. He is familiar with desire, even if it is not fulfilling him; he is aware of its reality in his life, whereas aspiration is a stranger to him. So he feels that desire is his friend.

There comes a time when the person feels that aspiration does exist, realisation does exist. But this aspiration and realisation are not meant for him, because from the very beginning he has not led a spiritual life. But again, I wish to say that he is making a big mistake. Aspiration *is* for him; realisation *is* for him. Only he has to accept them as his own, very own.

Question: What is gratitude?

Sri Chinmoy: Gratitude means to become a flower in every part of your being: body, vital, mind and heart. Everything in your being will exist only as a flower. There are 86,000 subtle nerves inside you, but there will not remain anything else except a flower. You as an individual will become only a flower to be placed at the Feet of the Supreme. This flower is completely open; all the petals are blossomed. This is gratitude.

A student quoted one of my aphorisms: "One second of gratitude to God is worth three hours of intense meditation on God." He was finding it difficult to understand this aphorism. He thought that it meant that just to say "Thank you" for one second was worth several hours of meditation. But gratitude is not like shaking hands and saying, "Thank you." No, it may take you many incarnations to come up to the stage of true gratitude.

Inside the physical body there are thousands of nerves and inside the subtle body also there are thousands of subtle nerves. When everything disappears, when you exist only as a most beautiful flower and you feel that you are ready to be placed at the Feet of the Supreme: that is gratitude. But it may take hours, days, months, years or many incarnations to come to that stage. For one second of gratitude, the preparation may take quite a few years. So when I say that gratitude is the most difficult thing and the most important thing, please remember that I am referring to this kind of gratitude. When everything of yours has gone away, when everything of yours has melted and there only remains one flower, when you remain only as a flower ready for worship and you have placed yourself at the Feet of the Supreme: that is gratitude.

From now on, please feel that this is what I mean by gratitude. Otherwise, I will not say that one second of gratitude is equal to three hours of meditation.

Question: Can anybody follow Yoga?

Sri Chinmoy: Yes, everybody can follow Yoga, provided the person is very sincere in the spiritual life. There is no hard and fast rule that such and such a person only can follow Yoga. No, everybody can, provided he is very sincere in his spiritual approach.

Question: Recently it has become very fashionable for actresses and actors to go to India and follow a Guru. Do you think this is a sincere attitude towards this philosophy?

Sri Chinmoy: The thing is that if the actor or the actress is sincere enough to follow the spiritual discipline, then he or she is doing the right thing. But if others follow Yoga just because they do, then they are making a mistake. Yoga is not to be pursued just because such and such persons are following Yoga. If somebody feels the necessity of practising the inner life, the spiritual life, then he should go to India or anywhere where there are spiritual Masters.

Question: If hostile forces attack you, does it reduce your karma?

Sri Chinmoy: If you have done something wrong, then only you can say it is the law of karma. Otherwise, it is only misfortune if somebody comes and robs you. But just because you are innocent, do you think that you will get an abundant supply of wealth just because you were robbed? Somebody has done you a favour by stealing your things. It is not your fault, but somebody out of malicious feeling has stolen from you. Do you think that immediately you will get a fresh supply of the things that were taken? No, it is not like that. If you have done something good, if you have prayed and meditated, then God will bless you with divine qualities. But when you lose something, outwardly you will not always be compensated. You have to know that there are hostile forces hovering around. They attack and attack: they are out of control. If some naughty boy comes and strikes you and you have not disobeyed your mother or done anything wrong, it means that he has become a conscious or unconscious instrument of some undivine forces.

Question: Your philosophy says that we need perfection, but society seems to believe that people who are perfectionists are neurotic. Can you speak about this?

Sri Chinmoy: Each one has a sense of perfection. A child will feel that he is perfect if he can just smash twenty balloons. If someone else can remain quiet, then he will feel that he is perfect. If some-

one feels that God has told him to tell lies and he does tell lies, then he feels that he is perfect. If someone has promised to kill someone and he gets the gun and the bullets, then he feels that he is perfect. But finally wisdom dawns. He sees that by keeping his promise he would be sincere, but he would not be perfect. To kill someone else would be the worst possible thing. If you listen to the inner voice, the inner command, at all times, then you will know what to do. When you listen to this voice that is perfection.

Question: Could you please speak about ego, pride and confidence?

Sri Chinmoy: Human ego and divine ego. Human ego is something that binds us. Human ego is always "my" and "mine." Again, there is divine ego, which is divine authority, divine light. But we don't call it ego; it is our Reality, our Source. Divine ego is our Omnipresence: "I am everywhere." When we feel that we are everywhere, then who can bind us? But when we say that we are ourselves, at that time we are bound. The moment we concentrate on a particular part of our existence, immediately we become that particular thing. When our concentration is on the body, then the vital, mind, heart and soul are all our enemies. When we concentrate on the vital, at that time the heart and soul become foreigners, strangers. So human ego is very limited.

The divine part in us says, "I am omniscient, I am omnipotent, I am omnipresent, I am God's son." But if we don't pray, if we don't meditate, if we don't actually have that realisation, then we are

only fooling ourselves. The Christ said, "I and my Father are one." It is absolutely true, in essence, that we are God's children, but the Christ said it on the strength of his realisation. If we say the same thing without having the realisation, then people will laugh at us: "Yes, you and your Father are one; that is why you are so ignorant. If you and your Father are one, then you have to think of your Father also as ignorance incarnate." They will give you that kind of answer.

Human pride and divine pride. With human pride, what can I do? I can strike someone, I can break something, I can insult you, I can scold you, I can lord it over you. Human pride only breaks the cosmic rhythm of life. We have human pride because we have a sense of separativity. I am separate from you, so when I do something which you cannot do, then I am proud. But if I am divine, then immediately I will say, "God used me in order to achieve this and God didn't use you, but tomorrow He will utilise you to achieve something else. He will operate in and through you, and at that time He will ask me to remain silent. So how can I be proud when I know that I am not the doer? The actual doer is God. Today He wants me, He needs my existence to do something for Him; tomorrow He will need your existence to do something."

We have human pride because we separate our existence from others. But divine pride is different. When we have divine pride we say, "How can I mix with ignorance if my Source is God? If my God, who is my Eternal Guru, my Inner Pilot, is omnipresent, and if I am with Him, in Him and for Him, then how can I be separated from others?" With my right hand I will throw the shotput, but I

know that my right hand and my left hand are one. After throwing, the right hand will not tell the left hand, "Look, I have thrown the shotput fifteen metres, whereas you cannot throw it even one metre." No, the right hand will immediately feel its oneness with the left hand.

We have human pride when we feel that we don't belong to others, that we are one inch higher than others. But we have to know that if we are really one, then we can't be proud. My head never thinks that it is superior to my feet. That would be sheer stupidity. My head only says, "If I have no feet, then how am I going to stand?" I have got the mind, the head, but this head cannot walk. With my head I cannot go across the street. In terms of light, my head is higher, but necessity demands that my feet take me. Again, I can stand up, I can sit down, but if I want to read or write, I need my mind. Even then, my feet will take me to the school to learn. This is called oneness.

Everything is necessary. This moment God is using my head to do something, the next moment God is using my feet to do something. How can my head be proud of its existence when it knows perfectly well that God also uses my feet? Similarly, just because God is everywhere, this moment He is giving me the opportunity to be His instrument and the next moment He will use you as His instrument. So where is the question of pride? Pride comes only when I can do something that you cannot do, or if somebody is using me and not using you. But God uses everyone, so there can be no pride.

Human confidence and divine confidence. Divine confidence says, "I can do this because some-

thing divine, God, is within me. That is why I can do this, I can say this. But I could not do it otherwise. I can only mix with my wisdom, light and delight because my Source is God. So I have confidence." It is like a child who knows that his parents are rich. He is confident because they have money. Here, our money is spiritual wealth. We feel that God, who is our Mother and Father, has infinite wealth, so we have confidence; we have peace of mind, light and bliss. Confidence we get when we see the Source within us, the Supreme. When we see His infinite Light, infinite Peace and infinite Bliss within us, we have confidence.

Otherwise, in the ordinary life there is no confidence at all. When we say that we have confidence, we know within ourselves that we are just showing off. We have not possessed something, we do not have something. No, only we want something or we claim something. When we are sincere, we immediately know that we are trying to fool others, but when we have divine confidence, we are not fooling anybody. We know that our Source is the Supreme, who has everything: infinite Peace, Light and Bliss. That is why we are confident. When we become one with Him, we know He will supply us with all His wealth in infinite measure. When we pray and meditate, we have that feeling. That is called real confidence, divine confidence.

Question: How can we be most receptive?

Sri Chinmoy: Try to live a life of utmost sincerity, humility and purity. In that way you will be able to receive, according to your own receptivity, the divine Peace, Light, Bliss, Delight and Power that I bring down in abundant measure.

Question When I was meditating I felt really sick. My head was hurting and I felt I was pulling my meditation.

Sri Chinmoy If you get that kind of tense feeling immediately breathe in very fast, and when the rhythm of your breathing increases, the tension goes away. You are meditating and you are getting a tense feeling. Just imagine a flight of stairs, or a ladder that has got quite a few rungs. Try to feel you are climbing up, and you are breathing in as you are climbing up. One, two, three steps, you are going up, up. If you feel this ascent, then tension goes away. Tension comes when you are stuck at one place. But when you are climbing, it is like a bird flying up into the sky. When the bird is flying up where is tension? Similarly, if you are climbing up climbing up, then there will be no tension. Before you come to meditate next time, breathe in seven long breaths that will help you. If you breathe very powerfully, you will energise yourself and, at the same time, conquer sleep for a few minutes.

Question Where did God originate?

Sri Chinmoy: God originated Himself from His own inner Silence. He was One, but He wanted to become many. You cannot enjoy a game with only one person. If you want to play any game, you will need more players. God originated Himself out of His own Silence. He was One, but He wanted to become many in order to divinely enjoy the Cosmic Game.

Question: What can we do if we feel we are struggling and, at the same time, spiritual qualities like joy and aspiration are abandoning us?

Sri Chinmoy: We have to know whether it is a real inner struggle. It is very easy to use the term "struggle." If we have to budge an inch we say it is a struggle. If we have to get up early in the morning, if we have to tell the truth, it is a struggle. If we have to face reality for a fleeting second, it is a struggle. But each individual has to realise what real struggle is. Real struggle, for a sincere seeker, is to conquer ignorance in his own life and in the world around him. If the seeker 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. While struggling against falsehood, inertia, darkness, imperfections, limitations and bondage, he is bound to feel a kind of inner joy, provided he is sincerely struggling.

We have to know how hard we are trying to realise the Highest, how many minutes of our daily life we are consecrating to the Supreme in us, how hard we are struggling to see the light within us and others. If we have this kind of struggle, then the divine qualities which we have are bound to increase, because 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 against darkness and ignorance? If we are really making an inner, sincere spiritual struggle, then we are not going to lose our divine qualities. On the contrary, our inner qualities will increase in boundless measure.

IN GRATITUDE

At the 5 May 1978 meditation held in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, Sri Chinmoy thanked some of the friends of the Meditation Group who were present for their participation in and support of the Group's activities:

"Our dear Ambassadors, our highly esteemed brothers and sisters, we wish to offer you once more our heart's soulful gratitude. This time with your kind permission we wish to offer our soulful gratitude in prayerful silence."

A silent meditation followed. As an outer expression of the Group's gratitude, Sri Chinmoy then offered flowers and special cake to each guest, including Ambassador Rossides of Cyprus, Ambassador Thomas of Liberia and Sister Janet Richardson of the Holy See Mission.

Photo by Richard Howard



Sri Chinmoy with Ambassador Thomas of Liberia.



Photo by Richard Howard

*Sri Chinmoy with Ambassador Rossides of Cyprus
and Sister Janet Richardson from the Holy See
Mission*



Photo by Richard Howard

PEACE CORPS CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Part III

The Peace Corps commemorated its seventeenth anniversary 15 March 1978 with an evening programme at the United Nations in Conference Room 4, co-sponsored by the United Nations Meditation Group. The full text of the programme has appeared in the magazine in sections. This is the last of these installments.

PROGRAMME:

A SOULFUL TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION
OF THE SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE PEACE CORPS

15 March 1978

6:30 p.m.

Conference Room Four
United Nations, New York

United Nations Meditation Group Singers

Speakers:

H.E. Mr. Frank E. Boateng
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Ghana
to the United Nations

H.E. Tan Sri Zaiton Ibrahim
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Malaysia
to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Allard Lowenstein
United States Alternate Representative for
Special Political Affairs

United States Congressman Christopher J. Dodd,
Connecticut
(Former Peace Corps Volunteer in the
Dominican Republic)

Mr. Sam Brown, Director of ACTION

Mr. William Angel
Associate Officer for Planning and Evaluation
United Nations

Commissioner Haskell Ward
Community Development Agency, City of New York
(Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia)

Mr. Thomas Drahman
Executive Director of International Medical and
Research Foundation
(Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand)

Dr. Jasperdean Kobes
Director of Programs
World Education, Inc.
(Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia)

Awards Presentation—Mr. Sam Brown

*Sponsored by the Peace Corps
and the U.N. Meditation Group*

Photo by Richard Howard



Dr. Jasperdean Kobes, Director of Programs, World Education, Inc.: Last but not least, I hope. I would like to re-echo some of the thoughts that Congressman Dodd and Sam Brown made regarding the resource that returning Peace Corps volunteers represent. In 1972, when we were preparing for the tenth anniversary of Ethiopia I, which went into training in 1962, we surveyed approximately 250 of our group to find out what we thought of the Peace Corps ten years later and also what we were doing ten years later. We found out two things. First, most of us felt that our service in Ethiopia had really been much less useful than we thought it was in the beginning. We realised that we had learned much more from the experience

than we probably had given and secondly, we found out that a very large proportion of our group was working in activities related to community development and social change. So I think there is a vast network of us out there that could really be tapped for developing this country.

I would like to recall a personal experience that I had in November which, in a way, was my own celebration of the Peace Corps, sixteen years later. I was in the airport in Bombay waiting for my flight to Bangkok and two Ethiopian airline pilots came by. I noticed them because I had flown a lot on Ethiopian airlines. One of them stopped and said, "Covos, you were my teacher fifteen years ago." I was very proud of the fact that he was now a pilot, but I probably was also pleased that I was recognisable after fifteen years.

I was also asked to speak about returned Peace Corps volunteers involved in educational development in the Third World countries. Probably you've never heard about World Education, where I work. On our programme staff we have fifteen full-time professionals and nine of us—or 60 percent—are returned Peace Corps volunteers from Asia and Africa. Of course we have a higher number of those that are returned Peace Corps volunteers from Ethiopia.

Let me just give you a sketch of World Education, and you will see that what we learned in the Peace Corps is really being extended through the work that we are involved in now. World Education is a private, non-profit agency providing technical assistance in the field of integrated, non-formal education for adults in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the United States. World Education

works with indigenous public and private agencies which are addressing the basic human needs of low-income adults. These are primarily adults who have been by-passed by the formal education system and who are living in rural areas. At present, we are working in eleven field projects around the world and in a variety of short-term projects.

For example, in Ethiopia we are assisting the Ethiopian Women's Association to implement an integrated family life education project. This project combines health, nutrition, family planning agriculture, literacy, self-help and income-generating activities. At the present time, approximately one thousand adults are involved in this project. In the next five years it will be extended to include about ten thousand adults.

World Education's approach has evolved over the past twenty-five years and is based on our experience of those years. Recently, the experience and vitality of Peace Corps volunteers has also been integrated into our organisation. First, we have learned that individual growth in community development occurs when adults themselves actively participate in identifying their own needs and developing approaches for responding to these needs. Second, we have learned that the approaches for coping with basic human needs must be integrated. The problems are so interrelated and interlinked that the solutions must also cut across the traditional development sectors. And third, we have learned the significance of collaborating with local agencies which can continue the process of non-formal education when our assistance ends.

World Education provides technical assistance in three ways. One, by training staff of local agencies

in various programme skills like needs assessment, materials development, communications, feedback evaluation and programme planning. About 70 percent of our efforts involve training. Another way we help is by broadening the knowledge base of the field of non-formal education through reflection upon our experiences and also by undertaking action research projects. About 20 percent of our efforts are in this direction. Finally, we disseminate our results and experiences to field workers who are working with adults. We have a regular publication service and we also occasionally publish technical papers. Thank you.

Mr. Sam Brown: About a month ago, I was asked to talk to the now Senator Muriel Humphrey in regard to the possibility of naming what we anticipate to be a series of Peace Corps awards after Senator Hubert Humphrey. I called with some trepidation. Although I had become very close to Senator Humphrey in the last years of his life and he had been a great inspiration to me, I assumed that everybody in the entire world was calling these days to name something or other after Senator Humphrey. I thought that she would be somewhat reluctant to make any kind of decision. So, I was a little bit hesitant about calling her. She came on the telephone and we made a little bit of small talk, while I was trying to figure out how to say it. Finally I said, "Look, Senator Humphrey has meant a great deal to the Peace Corps over a number of years." Immediately her voice lightened and brightened up and she said, "Well the Peace Corps meant a great deal to him, and he always wanted

to do what he could." So I said, "In honour of his memory, we would like to name an award after him and to present it in his name." And instead of saying, "Well, I'll have to think about it, discuss it," or anything else, she immediately said, "I would take that as a great honour and so would he. When are you going to do the award ceremony? I would love to be able to come." Well, we talked about the date and the time and one thing or another. The staff had done its homework well, and I had a little slip in front of me about the time and date and place and all that sort of business. As it turned out, she was not able to come, but she responded immediately to the notion that a series of awards in his memory for people who have contributed to the Peace Corps, and to the vision and ideal for which we believe the Peace Corps stands, would not only be appropriate but would be something which he would have wanted. As a consequence, we initiated what we hope will be a series of awards over a period of time for international service, called the "Hubert H. Humphrey Award for International Service." I'm pleased to be able tonight to give the first two such awards.

One of the people to whom we are presenting awards tonight, has become very special to me in the last couple of years, because I have been working with her. And in a bureaucratic environment, to find someone who responds to every circumstance in a totally non-bureaucratic way, is unusual. Although I am technically the boss, she regularly gives me advice about what I should or shouldn't be doing or what mistakes I'm making today or will probably make tomorrow if I continue in my wayward ways. It's a real delight and I

am thrilled to have had the chance to work during the course of this past year with Velma Limford. She is Director of Recruitment Resources at ACTION. She didn't come originally to work for the Peace Corps; she originally came to help field the first one thousand VISTA volunteers fourteen years ago. She came from her native state of Wyoming, where she had been, among other things, the Wyoming State Superintendent of Education.

It's one thing to have people meddling and meddling around abroad. But it's quite a different thing to meddle in our own communities in a way that people came to understand that the desire for self-sufficiency in our country is as strong as that abroad, and that the needs for assistance in the poorest communities in America are as great as the needs in any other part of the world. That programme successfully survived the political travails of the last fourteen years as a result of her participation. Then, she was the first woman nominated for Congress from Wyoming, which faintly struck me as wrong, because Wyoming was the first state to give women the vote; so it seemed only appropriate that it should have long since nominated women for Congress. I think it made a good judgement when it nominated Velma for Congress, but I think it should have gotten around to it before 1968.

She has received awards from a variety of places, including Distinguished Western Women from the American Cancer Society and Distinguished Service for Wyoming awards. She was widely recognised not only as someone who speaks strongly and eloquently and very movingly, but as someone who

cares very deeply and loves very greatly and stands very much for the ideals I think we share. I am pleased tonight to be able to present this award to Velma Limford.

Photo by Richard Howard



Ms. Velma Limford, Director of Recruitment Resources at ACTION: Sam, I was just thinking that I am more than four times as old as the Peace Corps, and I couldn't help but thinking about being alive when each one of these organisations was formulated and hoping that some day it would happen here. And I must say to Commissioner Ward, that I went out recruiting for VISTA and while you'd been recruiting for the Peace Corps, they tried to tell you that the essence of doing

something lies in your own backyard. So I'm so glad to see you come back home. Remember the vision of Sir Lamfall: the leper said that "the gift without the giver is dead."

The Peace Corps is established on the idea that you set aside—not that you give of yourself, not that you make a financial sacrifice, but that you organise your life to set aside a given amount of time in which you will use your talents on the very cutting edge. During this time you learn that you know nothing unless you can transmit that thing which you know. So they became over the years a moving force, representing this great nation that gives so generously in money, as givers they were learning that service is a tripod. First you must recognise there is a need for some change. Then you must be willing to place your talents and your empathy there, knowing that should you make the decision you could make so much better a decision there, but standing aside and letting others make that decision and then giving continuous support until that decision becomes a reality for the people who care. People serve in various ways. I can't pass the physical examination to get in the Peace Corps, so that's the reason I'm where I am. And that's the reason I have been privileged to share just a little with every volunteer in the delivery of those services which are fulfilling the basic needs of the world. And that's the reason, as I go over the country, that I can recognise volunteers. I sit down on the plane and somebody looks around and takes the middle seat, and says, "Do I know you?" And I say, "No, but you will. Where did you serve?" And sure enough, sure enough, they are volunteers.

Mr. Sam Brown: That reason, among other things, is a persuasive argument for changing Peace Corps medical standards. The second award I am privileged to be able to present tonight is to one of the people who spoke earlier this evening: Congressman Chris Dodd. I must say, at a difficult time, about ten days or two weeks ago, I went up to Connecticut to Chris' district and met his charming wife and stayed in the lovely house they have up there. We had been at dinner and then sort of hung around after dinner talking. I suddenly came to realise that Chris is a year or so younger than I am. But I must say that it was a shocking kind of experience. I'm inclined to think of myself as certainly not old enough to be a member of Congress and to hang around that sort of stodgy environment up there. Remember me at appropriations time, Chris. To know that he has been there now—this is his second term—having come back from the Peace Corps and hitchhiking around at the time I was doing pretty much the same thing, is hard to believe. It is good to know that someone to whom I've come to feel very close could, in fact, serve in the United States Congress and not be that stodgy stereotype, but in fact be someone who hasn't lost that sense of values and proportion—that he could be someone who continues to care about people one at a time. To see him moving with people and talking to people makes you understand what it was that not only made him a terrific volunteer but also makes him one of the really strong younger men in Congress. I know he is the first member in Congress from Connecticut to be in the House Rules Committee

for many years, which says something either about Connecticut or him. He is in a leadership position in the House, having become majority representative-at-large. He has expressed a tremendous concern and become one of the real fighters in Congress on issues of human rights, on questions of U.S. energy policy—particularly on alternative energy—and a fighter on behalf of the rights of handicapped individuals in this country. Moreover, he is one of the great friends that the Peace Corps has had not simply with the vote but equally important with the voice he can raise as a former volunteer.

A lot of people are talking about how we can provide military assistance. Chris is sort of off to the side some place saying, “Look, there’s another side to what the United States does, which represents that which is the best in us.” And it is that which is in us, which is our best, that he represents as well. I am very pleased to give you tonight, Chris, the Hubert H. Humphrey Award for International Service.



Photo by Richard Howard

Congressman Dodd: I've already spoken once, and once is enough I suppose, for any politician in a given evening. I'm sorry you're not in Congress. We need people like you. Run again, will you, for God's sake. Thank you very, very much.

Let me just comment a bit on what Sam had to say. First of all, I wrote everything he just said. You know, there is a new mood in Congress. I was elected in 1974 with seventy-five new members of Congress. We were sort of considered the Watergate Children that arrived in Washington in January of 1975. At that time there were many, many people—columnists and others—who expressed deep concern that this new group of Congressmen was going to shake the pillars of government and destroy the very principles upon which this nation of ours was founded. I think the past four years have shown that this new group—this new breath of fresh air that entered the halls of Congress—has done an awful lot to restore some of the confidence in government. We still have a long way to go, but we have come a long way. I would like to think that just a little bit of that spirit and feeling that I have as a member of that institution was born in my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic. We have all had our individual experiences. Someone talked about the chicken man. I was the pig man in the Dominican Republic. I didn't know anything about pigs. I was an English major in college. I went into the Peace Corps at a time when the major part of our training programme consisted of six o'clock calisthenics at a camp in Puerto Rico and massive language training programmes, but not a lot of sensitivity, I suppose, to what we were going to force upon the Dominicans.

The Peace Corps has come a long way, but through that experience I grew a tremendous amount. I had come from a white middle class family living in Connecticut and the farthest thing from my experience was what I was about to learn as a Peace Corps volunteer. What I learned during those two years. I feel, has contributed a great part to my thinking today as a public servant.

It's not easy today to serve in public life. Sam talked today about being a year older than I am. Can you imagine the state of Colorado trusting Sam with all of its tax money. They did it. Being a part of the political world today requires a greater degree of sensitivity. I wish more ex-Peace Corps volunteers would think about public service, even for a limited period of time. I think through the process of bringing people into structures of government in this country on a local and state and federal level, we can begin to restore the kind of faith that people need to have in their institutions. We need to see the nation move forward, to see the principles that Al Lowenstein talked about revived. We have it in us. It is much more difficult to arouse and sustain the good feelings in people, but they are there. It is very easy for anyone to arouse the fear and hatred in people; we have enough demigods around the world today who are doing that. We need to have more and more people who are willing to take the chance, make the commitment and try to restore a better world for all of us. And so, on behalf of all the ex-Peace Corps volunteers, Sam, who have served over the past seventeen years and who, like Commissioner Ward, are coming back home and trying to

improve the quality of life for all of us, I accept this with a great deal of appreciation. Thank you all very much.

Mr. Kevin Keefe, United Nations Meditation Group: Three years ago we had a programme here at the United Nations, which Senator Humphrey was not able to attend. But he would have liked to and he sent us a message. I think it's appropriate to close our programme with that message now:

“I join my friends at the United Nations, and throughout the United States, in the hope and prayer that a just and lasting peace may be achieved within and among the nations of the world. On this special occasion I urge them to join me in reaffirming a strong personal commitment to the relentless pursuit of this peace.”

Thank you all very much.

GONE ARE THE DAYS

"Gone are the days when each Nation was an island unto itself."

U Thant

$\text{♩} = 132$ Moderate music by Sri Chinmoy

Gone--- are the days when each----- Na-----tion
was-- an is-----land-- un-----to
it-----self----- (sing 3 times)