

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.

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SRI CHINMOY MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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.

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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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Over the past few months the Meditation Group at the United Nations has held special commemorative programmes which have drawn participation from the President of the General Assembly and several Permanent Representatives. Reflecting one of the topmost recent concerns of the United Nations community, the observances often focused on the problems relating to the Iranian crisis. The three meetings highlighted in this issue—"Special Prayer Meeting for the Iranian Crisis," "Human Rights Day Observance," and "Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Philosophy of Non-Violence"—received television coverage. For two of the programmes, dedicated to Human Rights and Martin Luther King, WPIX-TV's U.N. Correspondent, Mr. Jeff Kamen, served as Master of Ceremonies.

At the back of this issue are questions and answers and talks about the United Nations and meditation philosophy, which are a regular feature of the *Bulletin*.



Sri Chinmoy presides over the Meditation Group's special prayer session for the U.S. hostages in Iran. Participants include, from left to right: Sri Chinmoy; Mr. Herbert Rickman, Special Assistant to Mayor Ed Koch of New York City; Dr. Julie Loranger, Canadian Mission; Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, President of the American Jewish Committee; Dr Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Director of the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C.; and Sister Janet Richardson, Representative of the Holy See Mission to the United Nations.

SPECIAL PRAYER MEETING FOR THE IRANIAN CRISIS

An emergency prayer and meditation service was held in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium on 16 November 1979 on behalf of the U.S. hostages in Iran and in support of the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Security Council members, all of whom had sent urgent appeals to the Government of Iran seeking immediate release of the captives. Speakers included representatives of four of the world's major religions, as well as a representative of the host City of New York.

The programme was originally scheduled as an International Thanksgiving Day celebration, and Dr. Julie Loranger represented Canada, which received recognition for its 100th celebration of Thanksgiving this year. Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Director of the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C., and author of the article in a recent National Geographic, "Pilgrimage to Mecca," spoke on meditation in the Islamic religion. The Meditation Group Singers also performed "World Gratitude" and "Human Rights."

Excerpts from the programme follow.

Sri Chinmoy: The world has always experienced the indomitable strength of American arms. Now the world is experiencing the incomparable strength of the American heart. In life's battlefield, America's unparalleled compassion-heart will unmistakably and decisively win. And this unprecedented conquest shall supremely shine in the universal oneness-family of the aspiring and self-giving humanity.



Mr. Herbert Rickman, Special Assistant to Mayor Ed Koch: Guru, distinguished members of the clergy, members of the diplomatic corps, ladies and gentlemen, some thirteen days ago an event which took place in Teheran many thousands of miles away from here captured the minds and hearts of good people throughout the world. This is a tragic time not only for the people of America but for the people of Iran. It is a time that dictates

compassion and understanding—understanding of the rage that has dominated the Iranian people and the frustration that has caused them to perpetuate the events which have occurred in recent days; and compassion, of course, not only for these same men and women, but also for the sixty innocent people caught in the vise of international politics. In the name of humanity and in the name of all good people throughout the world, here at the United Nations we appeal to the students in Iran and the religious leadership of that country to give the world the most beautiful Thanksgiving gift of all, and that is the release of the sixty men and women in the American Embassy.



Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, President of the American Jewish Committee: This is a prayer from the Book of Psalms, which means, "Pour down, O Heavens, from above and let the sky rain right-

eousness. Let the earth open, that deliverance may flourish and righteousness, too, spring up. And it will be said on that day, 'Behold our God; we have waited for Him and His Deliverance. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him. Let us be glad and rejoice in His Deliverance.' "

We live by great symbols which have transcendent universal power for uniting people across the divergences of languages and geography. There are a whole range of symbols at loose in the world today. In the Middle East there is the symbol of Mt. Sinai—the flag of Israel being drawn down, Mt. Sinai being handed over to President Sadat of Egypt, and the President making his first announcement that he will establish atop Mt. Sinai a mosque, a church and a synagogue, as a symbol of the unity of humankind under the uniting power of God. Mt. Sinai symbolizes four thousand years of Jewish tradition and teaching. It is not just a Bible story. It is a symbol of the breakthrough in human consciousness, the transformation of the history of ideas. . . .

There is another symbol in Iran today which makes us aware of how much absurdity, how much irrationality governs human life today. An earthquake took place in Iran two days ago. Six hundred human beings were destroyed. Six hundred lives were wiped out, and the world acts as if nothing happened. Recently, I came back from Thailand, Cambodia, Southeast Asia. I see what can happen when human life becomes expendable, when people become a means to somebody else's end, a means to somebody else's programme, ideology, revolution, violence, terrorism. If religious people stand for anything in the world, it is to stand against the epidemic of de-humanization that is

taking place on every continent, to stand against the depersonalization, to stand against the idea that human lives are expendable for purposes beyond human beings. It is to stand and affirm that which is central in all of our high religions: the preciousness of every human life.

For the sixty people in that embassy whose lives have become symbolic of the vulnerability of every human being, we come together to affirm that sanctity, and to commit ourselves again in prayer and in hope and in daily action to uphold the value of every human life: to say no to tyranny, to say no to religious and racial and ethnic hatred, to affirm above all that what unites us is greater than what divides us, to affirm that in the oneness of God we find our solidarity and our unity as brothers and sisters, and to say that we will not sleep nor slumber until deliverance and redemption and healing is brought to the sixty people in that embassy, and to all of our brothers and sisters who suffer in the world today. God bless all of you.



Sister Janet Richardson, the Holy See Mission to the United Nations: Perhaps we could join together in prayer: Heavenly Father, our hearts are full

of thanksgiving, but they are also full of pain and of petition. We thank You for the gift of life. We thank You for the graces and blessings that have come to us today. We thank You for the inspiration that You gave to those who organized this programme. We ask that You reward their efforts. Heavenly Father, we turn to You in petition for the safety of the hostages. We ask Your Blessings on their captors. We ask Your Consolation for their families. And may peace and love return to all our hearts. Amen.



Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Director of the Islamic Center, Washington, D.C.: Our Lord, we thank Thee for gathering us at this moment when humanity is going through a difficult test—a test of the strength of the spirit, a test of the degree of restraint. Please, Our Lord, strengthen us during

this crisis; guide our leaders on the right path. We thank Thee, Our Lord, for guiding this Group of Meditation at the United Nations in holding this meeting. Please bless everyone who is here at this moment.

(Dr. Rauf then gave the main address in honour of International Thanksgiving Day. An excerpt of his talk is below.)

I am very grateful indeed for the opportunity to address you on the concept of meditation in the Islamic religion. In Islam there are three major categories of reflection or meditation. The first is reflection upon the creation of God—by this I mean the things created by God—in order to estimate the greatness of the Almighty, the triviality of human existence and also of material life, in order to cleanse one's own soul or to elevate oneself to a greater level of spiritualism. Muhammad himself has said, "One hour of meditation is greater than worshipping in other categories for one year." One hour is greater than one year because the effect of meditation on the soul is so great. It improves, it reforms one's soul, one's heart. So that is one way, namely to reflect upon God and His Creation.

The second category is reflection on social questions or social problems—to reflect, for example, upon the poverty of the poor people, who are our neighbours, and upon the bounties God has given us. Here you analyse yourself and how you are composed, reflecting not only on the physical matter, the cells and components of the systems, but also on the mind. You reflect on the fact that

you as a human being, unlike other living creatures, can perceive things, that you can store ideas, that you can make judgements, that you can even create ideas. This power is a real gift from Almighty God. If you reflect upon all your full physical and mental perfection and then think of the others who are deprived of this, you become more charitable, more sympathetic and hopefully more helpful to the members of your society.

The third and last category is meditation, or reflection on one's own behaviour every day. It is recommended that, especially before going to bed, you spend a few moments reviewing what you have done during the day. This is because you are so closely involved with what you are doing that you may not really appreciate its value—whether it is right or wrong appropriate or inappropriate. But when you review it afterwards, when you are somewhat removed from the influences around you, then you can assess your works more impartially. If you reflect on your major works during the day and if they are desirable and good, then you thank God the Almighty for helping you and giving you the strength to perform these good things. We Muslims always believe in God's Will. It is true that you have a choice and to some extent you have a role in bringing about your action, but without God's Will to help you, you cannot do anything. If you find that you have done something wrong, then you should seek God's forgiveness to absolve your mistakes. Acknowledging the fact that you have made mistakes is a good thing for a person. When you realise that you can also make errors, you don't become unduly arrogant or overestimate yourself.

So, these are the three categories of meditation in Islam, and these are the ideas and thoughts I

intended to relate to you today. I would like to repeat my gratitude and express my thanks to you all for this opportunity. May God bless you.

(Dr. Rauf then presented a letter of appreciation from Thanksgiving Square in Dallas, Texas, to Dr. Julie Loranger of the Canadian Mission, for Canada's 100th celebration of Thanksgiving this year.)

THANKS
■ GIVING
SQUARE

November 12, 1979

CENTER FOR WORLD THANKSGIVING

1879 - 1979

CANADA'S 100th CONTINUOUS THANKSGIVING DAY

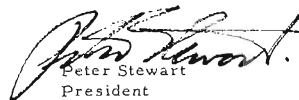
We honor the people of Canada who have given thanks to Almighty God together as a nation continuously for one hundred years.

The universal impulse of mankind to show gratitude to their Creator is expressed in different ways on each continent.

Only a few nations, however, including Canada, Switzerland, Liberia, Japan and the United States have formal Thanksgiving days every year for their people. Many others express gratitude in other ways through ancient customs and observances.

Canada's one hundredth continuous Thanksgiving unites their great people with the other peoples of the world who give thanks to God for life itself as one human race.

CENTER FOR WORLD THANKSGIVING


Peter Stewart
President

First Emergency Prayer & Meditation Service At UN

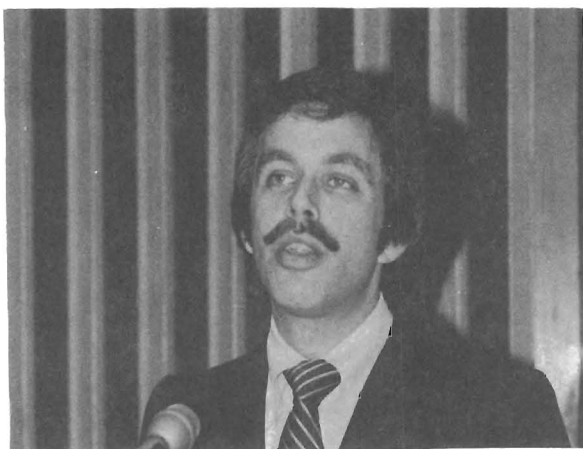


UNITED NATIONS -- Representatives of four of the world's largest religious denominations gathered for Iran hostages on short notice at the U.N.'s Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium on what might be best described as an emergency hostage prayer service. (Left to right, Sri Chinmoy, Herbert Rickman, Dr. Julie Loranger, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf, and Sister Janet Richardson.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OBSERVANCE

The U.S. hostages in Iran were the focus of attention on 10 December 1979 at a special programme at United Nations Headquarters commemorating Human Rights Day. It brought together the President of the General Assembly with representatives of Egypt, Israel and the United States. The programme opened with a short meditation by Sri Chinmoy, who presented an award to U.N. General Assembly President Ambassador Salim Ahmed Salim for his efforts to free the hostages. Mr. Jeff Kamen, WPIX-TV's U.N. correspondent, was Master of Ceremonies.

Excerpts from the programme follow.



Mr. Jeff Kamen, WPIX-TV: On behalf of Sri Chinmoy, I'd like to welcome you all here. My name is Jeff Kamen, United Nations correspondent for WPIX television, New York, and I'm honoured to be the Master of Ceremonies at this brief but still important human rights observance. May I ask our invited guests, the representatives of Egypt, Israel and the United States, along with General Assembly President Salim Ahmed Salim, to come up on the stage now to join in a moment of silence on behalf of all humanity. Immediately following the standing moment of silence, Sri Chinmoy will make a presentation to Ambassador Salim for his courageous personal efforts on behalf of the diplomatic hostages in Teheran and his dedication to the dignity of all people everywhere, that made him the recipient of the special, and might I add surprise, award. Mr. Salim did not know that he was receiving the award today. (A brief meditation follows.)



His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, President of the General Assembly, whose courageous efforts to free the U.S. hostages in Iran have won world-wide respect, receives an award from Sri Chinmoy, leader of the Meditation Group.



His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, President of the United Nations General Assembly: Sri Chinmoy, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, first I must confess that I am extremely moved by this award and the thoughtfulness behind it. It is very difficult to keep secrets in the United Nations, but I must confess also this was one more secret, and I am completely surprised and overwhelmed by your gesture. I shall try my best to live up to the expectations which this beautiful award carries with it.

It has become increasingly fashionable among some people to reject celebrations and commemorations. Often these are the people who have taken a cynical view of the observance of occasions such as Human Rights Day on the grounds that there is such a wide-scale violation of human rights these days in so many places that it is not serious to celebrate this day.

But I believe such an attitude is misguided and misses the whole point. Life never offers perfection. But progress is not only possible, but a proud fact of life. Into the sorriest spots on this planet the light of freedom and human decency has begun to shine. Certainly not everywhere and certainly not all the time is justice beginning to prevail. But clearly change for the better in the human rights field is taking place. We must work to accelerate that change. Above all, we must categorically refuse to tolerate, much less condone, any and all violations of human rights under whatever pretext.

For those of us who have recently broken the bonds of colonial control, the exhilarating sense of liberty is still fresh upon us. For those still under the yoke of oppression, there is the rising expectation of what tomorrow can bring.

If there is any single lesson that has emerged from this period of the history of mankind, it is that the genuine aspirations of people for liberty and human dignity must be met if our small and fragile world is to bear any hope for survival and growth. If we approach each challenge with courage and sincerity, we, as a community of nations and people, can find peaceful and just solutions to the problems which confront us.

May Human Rights Day invoke within each of us a renewed commitment to the oneness of all humanity. We are, in the final analysis, all brothers and sisters and children of one family—the human family.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: Thank you, Mr. President. Our next speaker is the distinguished scholar and diplomat, Yehuda Blum, the highly respected and much admired Ambassador to the United Nations from the State of Israel. Ambassador Blum speaks today for a people with a human rights tradition of thousands of years that transcends boundaries of nation and culture. Ambassador Blum.



His Excellency Mr. Yehuda Z. Blum, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations: Mr. Chairman, Mr. President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Sri Chinmoy, ladies and gentlemen, some nineteen hundred years ago the sages of Israel, in referring to the creation, as described in Genesis, raised the question:

“Why was Adam created single?” They offered the following explanation:

To tell us that whoever is responsible for the loss of one single life is deemed as if he were responsible for the loss of the entire universe. By the same token, whoever preserves the life of one single person is deemed as if he saved the entire universe Consequently, each individual is entitled to say: 'the world has been created for my sake.'" (Mishna, Sanhedrin, 4:5)

There could be no more concise and succinct formulation of the fundamental concept of human rights, and no clearer affirmation of the equality and dignity of man and of the intrinsic value of every human being. This constitutes an unequivocal repudiation of all those who have sought throughout history to define the role of the individual merely as a means towards the advancement of what they perceived as the interests of society.

In our own time we have again witnessed the rise of ideologies which deny man's right to regard himself as an end rather than as a means and which unreservedly subordinate his inalienable rights to the needs and interests of the rulers. These ideologies, in their denial of the intrinsic dignity of every human being, brought untold misery, suffering and destruction on all of mankind.

When the United Nations came into being in 1945, the Charter reaffirmed mankind's faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person. In the pursuit of these objectives the General Assembly adopted in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the three decades that have elapsed since, the United Nations also sponsored the adoption of a large

number of human rights conventions, culminating in the two Covenants of 1966.

Regrettably, all this preoccupation by the United Nations and other international organizations with questions of human rights does not reflect any real improvement in this field. If anything, it would appear that respect for human rights has diminished world-wide since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on 10 December 1948

I fully realise that my message is not a happy one. Some may even think it is out of place on an occasion such as this, which is largely a commemorative one. I believe, however, that it is a realistic appraisal of the situation confronting us. And, if we are truly interested in promoting the cause of human rights—as I am sure all those assembled here are—it behoves us to look the stark truth squarely in the eye.

Much remains to be done to translate into practice the noble ideals and principles of the Universal Declaration. On this thirty-first anniversary of its adoption, let us rededicate ourselves to the task of making the Declaration—this common standard of achievement—a living reality throughout the world.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: The United States of America has made a worldwide and very public commitment to the preservation and promotion of human rights for everyone. Speaking for the host country of the United States of America is Esther Coopersmith.



Mrs. Esther Coopersmith, Representative of the United States Mission to the United Nations: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you so much for having this service here today and it is a great honour to represent my country. As some of you know, I am a very optimistic person, but I must confess that I am, like all of America now, preoccupied with the problems in Iran. We are all in fact preoccupied with the Americans that are held hostage. We cannot think of a greater violation of human rights then what is occurring in Iran today, and rather then giving you a long speech, what I'd really like to do is to ask all of you to stand for a moment of silence to think about our hostages, because there, for the grace of God, go all of us. (*A moment of silence follows.*)

As Ambassador Blum has just said, there are so many serious problems today. We need to concentrate not only on the good things that have been done throughout the world, but also on some of the unfortunate realities that we are confronted with. Thank you so much.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: Now I have the honour of introducing Mr. Mahmoud Karem Mahmoud, Representative of the Egyptian Mission.



Mr. Mahmoud Karem Mahmoud, Representative of the Egyptian Mission to the United Nations: Distinguished Chinmoy, Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I speak here today on behalf of Ambassador Meguid of Egypt who, due to an urgent commitment, was unable to address this august assembly. We are all assembled here to honour one of the most respected and important occasions, an occasion which is undoubtedly of paramount significance to us all: Human Rights Day. Egypt, the cradle of seven thousand years of civilisation, has and will always attach prominent importance to the respect of human rights and to the strenuous efforts of the United Nations best manifested in its declarations, resolutions and binding international agreements which all empha-

size the necessity of upholding human rights. It is the firm belief of Egypt that the denial of human rights is the denial of the essence of peace. The Charter of the United Nations has stated our determination to, and I would like to quote, "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

We, in the interests of international peace, order and security, must deplore the shameful violations of human rights anywhere in the world. We call on all states, therefore, to comply with the rule of law and international diplomacy and to the letter and the spirit of international conventions. We therefore reject the colonialism and racism that prevail in South Africa, and it is my duty here to bring this to the attention of this august gathering. We must all spare no effort to support the restoration of the human rights of the freedom fighters and peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe. In the Middle East, ladies and gentlemen, the Palestinian people must achieve their inherent and absolute right of self-determination. For the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian peoples is the crux of the Middle East problem, and Egypt is sparing no effort to help alleviate the sufferings of our brothers.

In conclusion, the delegation of Egypt wishes to reiterate its firm belief that all the international instruments on human rights, and in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be faithfully and scrupulously respected by all states. Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: As President Salim said, it's fashionable these days to put this kind of meeting down and say why bother. But just the sheer energy of people of good will coming together has a value that cannot be measured. I'd like to close the programme by quoting a very small poem by the person who's really brought us all here—Sri Chinmoy—and I think it's most apt for this day: “When the power of love replaces the love of power, man will have a new name: God.”

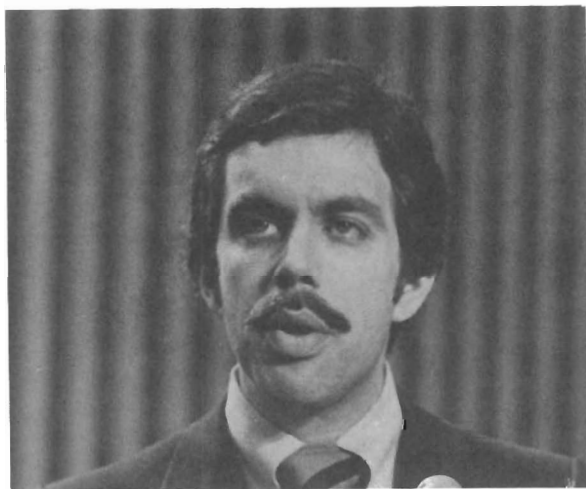
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.:
THE PHILOSOPHY OF NON-VIOLENCE

On 15 January 1980 diplomats and journalists joined Sri Chinmoy and the Meditation Group in a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his philosophy of non-violence on the 51st anniversary of his birth. Speakers included Ambassador Donald McHenry of the United States; Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore; Ambassador Niaz Naik of Pakistan; WNBC-TV correspondent Mr. Carl B. Stokes, former Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio; and Mexican journalist Luis Olivarrieta. WPIX-TV's U.N. correspondent Mr. Jeff Kamen was Master of Ceremonies.

A similar observance was sponsored by the Meditation Group in 1977 at which Mrs. Coretta Scott King, then a U.S. Representative to the General Assembly, was guest of honour. Excerpts from the programme follow.



Opening meditation led by Sri Chinmoy.



Mr. Jeff Kamen: Good afternoon and welcome. Today would have been the 51st anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr. We all would have

had the joy of celebrating it with him had it not been for an assassin's bullet. But that does not mean we cannot celebrate his glowing spirit, his magnificent message and his inner call to all of us to deal with the problems that we face in our individual lives and in the world through what Martin Luther King, Jr. called "creative non-violence." This assumes from the very outset that there is something very fine and decent in each one of us at our birth and that it stays with us, that it can be called upon if only each of us would try.

The name of our programme today is, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Philosophy of Non-Violence; A United Nations Observance of the Martyr, his Thought and its Relevance in Our Day." As you all know, events here at the United Nations in the past seventy days have been incredibly mixed and tense, sometimes confused. That is also the nature of the world and one of the reasons why it is so important that people who care about humanity and its survival and its hope of flourishing celebrate the beauty and spirit and truth of Martin Luther King, Jr.

We're going to begin now with a moment of silence in honour of the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. which undeniably is with us all now and with all people who care. Please join in a meditation in silence for Martin Luther King, Jr., led by Sri Chinmoy.

(A brief meditation follows.)

Our first speaker is America's pride, Donald McHenry, Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations.



H.E. Mr. Donald F. McHenry, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations: It is particularly fitting, I believe, that we should gather here on these grounds to commemorate the birth of Martin Luther King, and more importantly, to commemorate the message by which he lived and which he left to mankind.

Martin Luther King was an American who believed very strongly, very deeply in the principles of the United States and its Constitution. He recognized that while they are principles that have been laid down, they are—as is the case of many things—ideals towards which one has to work. They had not been achieved in his lifetime.

I do not believe, from what I know of him, from what I have read and from what I have heard, that he ever despaired of attaining the goals of the American dream. Rather, he looked upon the American Constitution in the same way that I think

the community of nations ought to look upon the United Nations Charter. It is not something that one necessarily achieves immediately, but it is a series of goals towards which one can work.

King combined, in my judgement, the best in the American spirit with some of the teachings of others. This was true whether one was talking about the writings of Thoreau or the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi. King clearly believed that the law was there to be obeyed and that those who felt they could not do so, must be willing to pay the penalty of failure to observe the law. And therefore we see those very poignant pictures of King being fingerprinted or led off to jail, and we are able to read the famous letter from the Birmingham jail. I think all of these are indications of how far he was willing to go and the price he was willing to pay in order to stand up for the principles by which he lived.

In this, the fifty-first year of the birth of King, I would hope that that kind of thinking, that kind of ever striving to attain a goal—with the realisation that it will not come easily and that sometimes one has to pay a price in order to attain a goal or principle—can somehow serve also to help us solve some of the very real problems which remain in the United States and in other countries and in relations between countries.

I should like to close with only one additional statement, and it is one King made towards the end of his life, after the laws had been changed in Alabama and Georgia and in many places in the country, when one could now sit on the stool in a restaurant, or theoretically, buy a house and get a job. He recognized that the task was, in a sense, only beginning. He said, "It was a poor joke to ask

a bootless man to pull himself up by his bootstraps!" I think that remark is a lesson for us in international affairs. We have made, in the last thirty years, magnificent progress in political independence, but we still have to move on towards the realisation of the principle of self-determination and do that which we can to help people attain the boots so that they can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Thank you.



Mr. Jeff Kamen: We have just seen and heard one subtle example of how it is that Donald McHenry has made such a powerful mark on the international community in such a short time.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was fond of the following lines: "Just a tiny minute, just sixty seconds in it. It wasn't mine to choose it, but I know I can't refuse it, because Eternity is in it." And at this moment, this instant of time of our lives—when I say "our lives," I mean the lives of the people of this planet—no country is more acutely aware of the acuteness of the moment than Pakistan. The headlines tell us why. It is a nation on the spot. And its extraordinary diplomat on the spot here at the United Nations is a man whose word and bearing commands something that goes beyond respect. I need only now introduce him, Ambassador Niaz A. Naik.



H.E. Mr. Niaz A. Naik, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations: I consider it a great honour and privilege to be included in this

programme today to pay homage to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, a man whose life was dedicated to the eternal ideals of love, peace and equality. His message of universal brotherhood and equality of man speaks for the collective conscience of mankind. It is always great men who, in their profound vision and powerful eloquence, have enunciated this message in the troubled phases of human history to save the world from destructive conflicts. Indeed, this message is, in a sense, a great movement to restore human dignity and fight oppression and injustice in human society.

During his famous march to Washington in 1962, Dr. Martin Luther King outlined his beliefs, and I would like to quote his thoughts. He said, "I have a dream that one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls as sisters and brothers." This simple but powerful expression of his philosophy, of his vision, was a clear call for universal brotherhood, love and peace.

All great religions enjoin upon mankind the ideals of peace, love and brotherhood. In a clarion call for struggle against tyranny, exploitation of man by man and people by people, Islam has proclaimed that the white man is not superior to the black, but all are equal in the sight of the Creator. I belong to that religion, and this is the divine message of the Holy Koran, which says, "Remember the Favour of Allah, which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies, and He united your hearts in love so that by His Grace you became as brothers."

The great endeavours of Dr. Martin Luther King were an unprecedented struggle against the injustice and inequalities that he witnessed in the

contemporary world. The voice of Dr. Martin Luther King did not represent an individual. It echoed the hopes and aspiration of mankind.

His message has a special meaning as we enter the decade of the 1980s, in a world dominated by strife and tension. It has a special appeal for the small and medium-sized countries of the Third World who are struggling for peaceful co-existence and for the right of their people to live in honour, dignity and prosperity. These nations dream of a world free of conflicts, where justice prevails. It would be a fitting tribute to the late leader for us to work jointly and collectively for a new world order to ensure justice, equality and peace for all men.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: One of the things Martin Luther King taught first America and then the world was not to underestimate who people may really be just because we see them in one role or another. Dr. King kept telling black Americans that the first thing they had to do was to put their shoulders back and stand with their back straight. Dr. King would say the reason to do that is because a man can't ride your back when it's straight. The message really transcended one of a black leader and black people. It was a message to the world, to all of us, and the people of the Third World were listening not only to Martin Luther King, Jr., but to others who heard his words and adapted them. Now we will hear from a small nation whose ambassador has probably some of the finest prestige anywhere in the international community. That is not only a tribute to him but also to the emerging reality of equality among nations, to which

Ambassador McHenry referred earlier. And so it is especially important that we have with us today his Excellency Tommy Koh, the extraordinary Ambassador from Singapore.



H.E. Mr. T. T. B. Koh, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations: Thank you very much. I want to make a very brief personal testimony on the influence that the late Martin Luther King has had on my life. I want to recall that in the years 1963 and 1964 I was a graduate student in this country. I think that was a truly historic period in the life of this nation. It was a moment pregnant with the prospect of a historic change in race relations. Martin Luther King

seized that historic moment and was able to impress upon the American national conscience the many shortcomings of the country in respect of the treatment of its coloured people and to bring about a truly deep and historic change in the attitudes of the American people toward its coloured peoples.

I was deeply affected by Martin Luther King's teachings, by his courage and his charismatic leadership. I come from a country which is also multi-racial and I believe deeply in the ethic which Martin Luther King taught, which is that one must always judge a man or woman by the content of his or her character rather than the colour of his or her skin.

I was so moved by him that in the summer of 1964, when I had completed my graduate work at Harvard, I volunteered to spend the summer working in Roxbury, in Boston. That was a great experience which I shall always remember. I have tried to put into practise many of the moral and ethical values which Martin Luther King taught the world.

I also deeply admire him because of his commitment to change through non-violent means. I think it takes a man of extraordinary moral content like King and like Gandhi to believe in that ethic and to be able to bring about the almost revolutionary changes in this country and in India that these two great men did.

Mr. Jeff Kamen: We are still a divided nation here in the United States. Racism is a reality. People of good will are struggling, but struggle means work and not everybody likes to work, especially not all the time. But one part, at least, of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream was realised in

1967, the year before his death. That was the election of a big city mayor who happened also to be black, and he is with us today. He is Carl B. Stokes, now a political correspondent for Channel 4 in New York, WNBC-TV—the first American black elected mayor of a major American city, that of Cleveland, Ohio.



Mr. Carl B. Stokes, WNBC-TV: Ladies and gentlemen, Martin Luther King did achieve a great portion of what he wanted to do in this country. Because of his efforts, he literally changed the legal face of this nation. It's difficult for many of you who come to the United States from other countries to hear us talk about justice and democracy and human rights, when you look around and see on every hand the imperfection that exists here. You

say: "How can you say things like that?" and "Why don't you change what is so wrong in this country?"

You have to be my age to know that change has occurred. When Martin began the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s, you have no idea how segregated, legally and informally, this country was. At that time black boys and girls couldn't hope to be a United States delegate to the United Nations. They could have no expectation of being a commentator or an anchor man or anchor lady on a television station—not even a radio station. None of them could think about sitting on corporate boards. None of them could think about being heads of educational institutions, because twenty years ago they couldn't even attend those institutions as students! They couldn't get a job there as a teacher. So it would have been ludicrous to think about one of them being the literal head of these institutions.

All of that has changed. Martin not only forever removed the legal structure that imposed and kept constant legal separation of the races, but he then was the spearhead, along with A. Phillip Randolph, the great labour leader, in leading the march on Washington. The march was literally against a President who was good in many ways, but who had not felt that Congress or the nation was ready to take on the heavy legislative responsibility of an all-encompassing bundle of civil rights laws that would say, "We're wiping out legal discrimination and legal injustice in this country." A. Phillip Randolph and Martin Luther King, Jr. put together the 1963 march on Washington that brought together a quarter of a million American citizens—white and black, men and women, young and old,

persons from every religious denomination, from literally every walk of life. Never before had this country risen up and manifested in as many components its willingness to face what had been one of the most serious problems in this nation since its inception, namely the relationship between white and black. That convinced the President. He introduced the civil rights bill passed in 1964 that outlawed for all time discrimination against men and women on the basis of their colour, their race, their national origin. And that subsequently served as a vehicle to eliminate another remaining problem in our country, that of discrimination against women.

Then, in 1965, Martin was part of leading the move to enact the 1965 Voters' Rights Act, which totally transformed the South—a total political facelift. Today the states of Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia have more elected black officials than do the states of New York, New Jersey or Pennsylvania. In counties where blacks could literally not hold jobs or could not go to a restaurant, today the sheriff is black, the county recorder is black, the county commissioner is black. In Atlanta, the citadel of the South, the mayor is black. And just a couple of months ago, in of all places Birmingham, Alabama, a black man was elected mayor.

These are the things that I think about in regard to Martin because often we don't give him credit for the permanence of the change that he brought about. It seems to be one of the weaknesses of people: always to think about the way things are today as opposed to the way that they were. The best way to sum up, at least for me, is to repeat a saying from an old Negro slave woman that Martin always used to use at the end of his remarks. He would try to help people remember the way it used

to be and give them a message for the future. He would say: "We ain't what we want to be and we ain't what we're gonna be, but thank God, we sure ain't what we was."

Mr. Jeff Kamen: Our final speaker is the Mexican journalist Luis Olavarrieta, a person who has dedicated his life to peace and is using journalism to further that cause.



Mr. Luis Olavarrieta: I am very pleased to be with you and very honoured to be in such distinguished company. As a neighbour of this country and as someone who has been coming here for many years, I see the change that has taken place

in the United States. Certainly Martin Luther King had a very definite impact on this nation and on many other nations as well. I would like to pay homage to his memory by speaking about something, in addition to non-violence, in which he was also very interested—peace.

All of us have seen films devoted to war and the justification of violence in the name of one or another ideology or in support of a political or religious obsession. We have observed the sophistication of the means of destruction. This sophistication culminates and is controlled from a large chamber which is called the war room. In this chamber and with the help of the latest technology, all the events of the armed conflict are registered upon huge maps on the walls: the armoured divisions that advance or retreat, the battles in process, the movements of friendly and enemy fleets, the deployment of bombers or the massive destruction of cities and civilians. Upon large tables and on relief maps the combat action is updated free of blood and fire. Trained hands move models of tanks, artillery pieces, small flags that represent a thousand or ten thousand soldiers. In this terrifying chess game the pieces are constantly changed to reflect victory or defeat.

There is nothing similar for peace. In the whole of our entire convulsed planet there is no peace room—no chamber from where to coordinate the constant efforts of the peace forces; the daily struggle of those who fight against ignorance, oppression and disease; the struggle of the people who continuously fight against injustice and discrimination, against political short-sightedness and ideological blindness. There is no peace room to coordinate the fight against war itself and its origins. To

honour all the heroes of peace, such as Martin Luther King, it seems feasible at this stage of human evolution and within the framework of the United Nations, to undertake the construction of a peace room. That would be, I think, a fitting tribute to all people who have striven for peace throughout the entire planet. Thank you very much.

Diplomats Honor Dr. King



Silent meditation on the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at King Day observance in Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, January 15. Left to right: Mexican Journalist Luis Olivarría, Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore, Ambassador Donald McHenry of the U.S., Sri Chinmoy who organized event, Ambassador Niaz Naik of Pakistan and Carl B. Stokes, WNBC T.V., former Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio.

Forty-eight hours after the United Nations condemnation of the Soviet blitzkrieg in Afghanistan, three diplomats who figured prominently in the General Assembly's landslide vote against the Russian aggression, joined Sri Chinmoy and his meditation group at the U.N. to celebrate the spirit of non-violence on the 51st anniversary of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ambassador Donald McHenry of the U.S. opened the King Day observance declaring, "It is particularly fitting that we should gather on these grounds to commemorate the birth of Dr. King and more importantly the philosophy by which he lived and the message he left to mankind

"He looked upon the American Constitution in the same way we at the United Nations ought to look upon the U.N. Charter: not necessarily something one achieves immediately but rather a series of goals towards which one can work.

"Dr. King never despaired of achieving the American dream outlined in the Constitution and I think we should not despair of achieving the world dream outlined in the Charter."

Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore, a young, highly regarded leader of the non-aligned movement, revealed that he had been, "deeply affected by Martin Luther King's teaching, his courage and his charismatic

leadership," and had been so inspired by Dr. King that when he finished his graduate studies at Harvard in 1964, Mr. Koh spent the summer working to help the poor of the Roxbury, Mass. ghetto.

Niaz Naik, Pakistan's Ambassador, an Islamic scholar and veteran diplomat, said of the martyred Nobel peace prize winner, "his message of universal brotherhood and equality of man speaks for the collective conscience of humanity."



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

12 December 1979

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I should like to convey to you my sincere thanks for the delightful flower arrangement which you so kindly sent to me on Human Rights Day.

You may be sure that this thoughtful gesture and your words in support of my endeavours were highly appreciated.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


Kurt Waldheim

Sri Chinmoy
Meditation at the United Nations



THE SECRETARY GENERAL

18 December 1979

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I should like to thank you for your good wishes on my birthday and for sending me an inscribed copy of your book "Four Hundred 400 Gratitude - Flower - Hearts".

You may be sure that I greatly appreciated the very kind words you addressed to me both in the dedication to your book and in the card which accompanied it.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Kurt Waldheim".

Kurt Waldheim

Sri Chinmoy
Meditation at the
United Nations



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 October 1979

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I wish to acknowledge with appreciation your kind letter of 2 October 1979 and in particular the good wishes expressed to me on behalf of the Meditation Group at the United Nations. I wish also to thank you for the beautiful floral arrangement which has brightened the hectic days at the outset of the General Assembly.

With my best wishes to you and through you to the members of the Group.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Salim".

Salim Ahmed Salim

Sri Chinmoy
Sri Chinmoy Meditation at the United Nations

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

During the 25 January and 15 February 1980 meetings of the Meditation Group, Sri Chinmoy answered the following questions about the United Nations, submitted by members of the Group.

Question: Is politics keeping the United Nations from manifesting its spiritual heart?

Sri Chinmoy: Politics, as such, is not a bad thing. But we have to know who is practising politics and how he is dealing with politics. Politics can operate through the unillumined mind. Again, politics can operate through the awakened heart. Politics can operate in the liberated life.

When it operates through the unillumined mind, its message is: "Take, if not grab everything, and become! Possess the world and become!" When politics operates through the awakened heart, its message is: "Give and take. There should be a reciprocal give and take, based on a mutual understanding. I give you what I have, you give me what you have. When you are in need of something from me, I shall, without fail, give it to you. When I am in need of something from you, I do hope that you will at that time also fulfil my desire." When

politics operates in the life that is liberated from the meshes of ignorance, from binding thoughts, binding ideas and so forth, its message is: "Give and become. Give what you have and what you are, and become. What you have is willingness. Give your willingness soulfully. What you are is unreserved capacity. This capacity unreservedly you will give, and then you will become."

When politics operates in and through the awakened heart and the liberated life, at that time the spiritual heart, which is universal oneness, will easily and inevitably be manifested in the outer life.

Question: To realise God, what hurdles must a world leader overcome?

Sri Chinmoy: A world leader is also a human being. No doubt he is more gifted than most human beings. He is blessed by the higher worlds to a greater extent than an ordinary human being, but the hurdles he faces remain the same.

If he has a questioning or doubting mind, or if he has an aggressive vital, then he has to overcome these hurdles. If he is all for himself, or his country, if he sings in silence and out loud only the song of "I" and "I-ness" — me and my country — then he most assuredly has to overcome these deplorable hurdles.

A true world leader is he who claims the world as his very own. He is a world leader not because he is known all over the world — no, never — but because he has certain capacities or qualities which he is supposed to distribute equally among the comity of

nations. The world knows his greatness, but the world has to feel his goodness as well. It is only when the world feels his goodness that an individual becomes indeed a world leader who protects, shelters, illumines, guides and pioneers in the world. The true world leader is not someone with certain extraordinary capacities who belongs to one particular nation and who always wants to remain as a member of that nation; it is not someone who won't allow himself to be part and parcel of the entire world. No! Only he who always claims to be of the entire world and for the entire world is the true world leader. Only he who has a free inner access to the outer world and who claims the length and the breadth of the world as his own, very own, is the true world leader. And this realisation is founded on his constant inner oneness with the universal Reality and constant willingness to be part and parcel of the integral world-reality.

Question: How loudly can we sound the trumpets proclaiming the spiritual heart of the United Nations?

Sri Chinmoy: As loudly as you can! But it is not the vital, aggressive force that you will use to sound the trumpet. No, you will use your soul's light. You have to bring to the fore your soul's light and spread it around you. This light has its own sound, which is at once most powerful and most effective.

Question: What does the soul of the United Nations do when we sing the U.N. songs during our meetings?

Sri Chinmoy: When the singers sing the songs soulfully, the soul of the United Nations manifests its loftiest hope. These are not merely songs; these are also prayers. Each prayerful song is like a candle flame placed on the altar of the United Nations. When the flame burns bright, the hope of the United Nations gets the opportunity to manifest itself most soulfully and most convincingly. Again, what we call hope is nothing short of the experience of truth, a fulfilling experience that will one day fully blossom in our heart-garden.

Question: How can the soul of the United Nations make the most progress?

Sri Chinmoy: The soul of the United Nations can make the most progress only when each individual serving the United Nations makes the utmost progress. Each individual has to feel that he is representing his respective nation. Not only the ambassadors and high-ranking officials, but all those who are serving the United Nations in any capacity should feel that they are representing their respective nations. Also, each individual, in all sincerity, should feel that the nation he is representing is a tiny drop, whereas the United Nations is the vast, infinite ocean. But a tiny drop undoubtedly has the right to offer its might to the ocean and the ocean will gladly accept it. It is by entering into the ocean that the drop loses all traces of its individuality and actually become the ocean. At that time, it discovers the supreme secret and truth that it is no longer just a drop but the vast ocean itself.

When an individual representing a particular nation joins the United Nations, the individual has to feel that he is merging into the ocean. Since he has become one with a larger reality, the experiences or realisations that he is going to offer to the world at large have to be universal ones. At that time, the individual will think only of the United Nations as such, and not of his own country. For the United Nations becomes his country.

Unfortunately, when individuals or nations claim to be part of the United Nations, often it is only that their desire-life wants to be fulfilled from the boundless capacities which the United Nations has, or the dream which the United Nations embodies. All the problems in the United Nations arise precisely because each nation wants something more—something more meaningful and something more significant—from the United Nations than other countries are getting. But it does not claim the United Nations as its very own.

The United Nations is like the ocean. The ocean is boundless, infinite. The ocean will say to the tiny drop: "Take as much as you want, my child. Only what you take has to be founded upon oneness. You and I are one. You are in me and of me, and I am for you always." If an individual or a nation, by virtue of an implicit oneness with the United Nations, speaks to the world, the experience or realisation being offered will be that we are of the One but for the many. If each individual and each nation at the United Nations can offer this experience to the world at large, then the United Nations will make fastest progress.

To really serve the United Nations, we have to think of everything in terms of the interests of the

United Nations, of the world-family—not in terms of how it will affect a particular member in the family. If everybody can think of the United Nations, as such, and not of his own personal profit or his own national interests, then the United Nations will make very fast progress. For each individual and each nation there must be one hope and one promise, not only in the consciousness of the evolving world but also in the blessingful Consciousness which is at every moment descending from above. If each individual nation and each individual can embody these lofty ideals, experiences and realisations, then the soul of the United Nations easily can make the fastest—absolutely the fastest—progress at every moment.

Question: Is a portion of the soul of the United Nations inside all the people who work for the United Nations in some capacity?

Sri Chinmoy: Yes, it is absolutely true that in some capacity the soul consciousness of the United Nations abides inside all those who work here. To serve the United Nations is a supreme honour, for inner awakening has dawned at the United Nations. There are very few places—one can count them on one's fingertips—where inner awakening has blossomed. The United Nations undoubtedly is one of the very, very few places in the entire world where the awakened consciousness can be seen and felt. The soul consciousness of the United Nations definitely works in and through each individual, no matter in which capacity he serves the United Nations.

Again, if we dive deep within, we must say that it is the soul of the United Nations that has accepted these individuals as its instruments, first in the inner world and then on the outer plane. He who accepts someone, he who employs someone, not only sees the potentiality and capacity of the person he employs, but also secretly offers additional capacity. First he sees some capacity inside the person who wants to work, and because he knows he has more capacity than the worker, he in silence offers more capacity. Here we are dealing with the soul. The soul has a free access to the Almighty, the Absolute; therefore, the soul has accepted the individual worker in the inner world and given the individual worker the capacity to serve the presiding deity of the Pilot Supreme of the United Nations, the Fate-Maker of the United Nations.

Question: What does the soul of the United Nations expect from those who work at the United Nations?

Sri Chinmoy: The soul of the United Nations expects only one thing from all those who work at the United Nations, and that is service-light. If an individual has an iota of service-light, then let him offer that iota of service-light to the dream—the vaster than the vastest, higher than the highest, deeper than the deepest dream—which the United Nations has and is. An iota of service will, without fail, bring the worker tremendous satisfaction from the soul's world.

This service-light, although it is an infinitesimal portion of the highest reality, has to be offered unreservedly at the start of our journey, throughout our journey and at the journey's close; it has to be offered unconditionally to the whole United Nations family. The United Nations family is awakened but not yet illumined. The body of the United Nations is awakened, but not illumined. The body consciousness of the United Nations—which means all those who are serving the United Nations—can and will be illumined only when each individual's service-light comes to the fore and is soulfully, unreservedly and unconditionally offered to the mighty, infinite ocean—the ocean of harmony, the ocean of peace, the ocean of light and the ocean of bliss that the United Nations seeks to manifest.

MEDITATION: WHAT IS IT?

Sri Chinmoy gave the following short inspirational talk at the 26 February 1980 meeting of the Meditation Group, held in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium.

Meditation: what is it? Meditation is peace of mind.

Peace of mind: what is it? Peace of mind is self-giving.

Self-giving: what is it? Self-giving is God-becoming.

God-becoming: what is it? God-becoming is the beginning of a new journey.

The beginning of a new journey: what is it? The beginning of a new journey is a transcending Eternity.

A transcending Eternity: what is it? A transcending Eternity is an increasing Infinity.

An increasing Infinity: what is it? An increasing Infinity is a fulfilling Immortality.

A fulfilling Immortality: what is it? A fulfilling Immortality is something that I have and something that I am. What have I? A birthless and deathless smile. What am I? A sleepless and breathless cry.

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