

**ALLAHABAD 1972**

Dr and Mrs Roles, Mr and Mrs Allan

THE TEACHING ON PARAMATMAN

AUGUST 1970 – APRIL 1973

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## PREFACE

During the autumn of 1970, the Shankaracharya spoke several times to the people at his Ashram in Allahabad on the subject of the Param-Atman (Universal Self).

This was the first translation we received:

Discourse on Meditation and Param-Atman  
by His Holiness the Shankaracharya, August 1970.

Meditation – meditator – and the object of meditation – these three always go together. There can be no meditation if either the meditator or the object of meditation are not there. The object of meditation is Param-Atman, the ultimate truth, the absolute truth, and the one and only Truth that has real existence.

There is no such thing as the “world”<sup>\*</sup> from the point of view of real existence. Yet we see a “world” around us. This seeing is like seeing a mirage (illusion) – seeing a thing where there is none because the world we see is not what it appears to be. We only see at a conjuror’s show what the conjuror intends us to see.

Unreal though a mirage is, yet we cannot dispel it by any physical means. That is, we cannot dig it out with a spade or blow it away with artillery. As it is due to certain conditions of light, it goes away only when those conditions have gone. Similarly, the mirage of the “world” is due to certain conditions of ignorance, and it goes away only when that ignorance is gone.

Consider a sugar-cube; the real thing about it is its sweetness. Its form is irrelevant – whether it is cubical or round or granulated or any other shape. Now the Manas (‘computer mind’) is incapable of

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<sup>\*</sup> Used in the same sense as Christ’s words: “In the world ye will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

imagining ‘sweetness’, though it is real. It can, however, imagine objects having the property of sweetness – like sugar-cube or fruit or pudding; and these, in turn, enable us to realise what sweetness is. Thus to get at the abstract we take the help of material forms, the concrete; to get at the extra-sensory we go from the sensory object. Similarly, we meditate with the help of a ‘mantra’, which is a sensation of sound, in order to get at something which is otherwise beyond the reach of the human mind – the Param-Atman.

Let us revert to the sugar-cube. The sugar-cube comes from sugar; sugar comes from sugar-cane; sugar-cane comes from soil, water, air, light, etc. Carrying on the argument “this comes from that, that from that ...”, etc., we ultimately trace the origin of the sugar-cube to the ‘Avyakta’ (‘Unmanifested Nature’). Then the origin of the sugar-cube, which we can perceive through our senses, lies in Avyakta, which we never could perceive through our senses. Similarly, all perceptible phenomena (collectively called “the world”) originated from Avyakta, and will finally merge into Avyakta. This is the view of the Tradition of the Shankaracharyas.

We want to meditate (contemplate) on the Param-Atman. As it is the source of all greatness, its own greatness must be infinite. As it is the source of all happiness, its own happiness must be boundless. As it is the source of all beauty, its own beauty must be – we do not know. . . . But how could we ever meditate (contemplate) on such a Param-Atman, whose qualities and nature are thus beyond the utmost stretch of human imagination?

This was the question which was naturally put by Arjuna to the

Lord Krishna, and the answer is contained in the Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 10, verses 20–42.

Here is a translation of a few of those verses:

“O Arjuna! I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, and the Life, and I am the end of them all.

. . . . .

Of the Scriptures I am the Hymns; I am the Electric Force in the powers of Nature; of the senses I am the registering mind; and I am the Intelligence in all that lives.

Among the vital forces I am Life itself; I am Mammon to the heathen and godless; I am the energy of fire, earth, wind, heaven, sun, moon and planets. . . .

I am all-devouring Death; I am the Origin of all that may happen; I am fame, fortune, speech, memory, intellect, constancy and forgiveness.

. . . . .

I am the gambling of the cheat, and the splendour of the splendid; I am Victory; I am Effort; and I am the Purity of the pure. . . .

Whatever is glorious, excellent, beautiful or mighty, be assured that it comes from only a part of My splendour.

But what is the use of all these details to you? O Arjuna! Enough that I sustain all this world with only a fragment of Myself!”

(Discourse continues):

All this implies that by thinking of the most powerful manifest thing as only a tiny particle of Param-Atman’s power; by thinking of the most beautiful object we can, and then treating it as a mere atom of Param-Atman’s beauty and so on, we can gradually find our way to the Param-Atman. Thus, starting from sensory objects

and rising higher and higher, we reach a state where all difference between sensory and ultra-sensory, between definable and indefinable has faded away from us.

Then, what to ordinary people are different forms and shapes, are to a fully-Realized person all manifestations of one and the same Param-Atman. What he sees then around himself and within himself, is Param-Atman, and not the mirage which we call “the world”. Such a man would welcome heat and cold, pleasure and pain, fortune and misfortune – all alike, because all are manifestations of Param-Atman.

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30th August 1970

Reply from His Holiness (via J.) to R.'s question:

Is there any further advice His Holiness can give on the subject that the Atman alone is real and looks on all the changing events and situations as a passing show, without getting involved?

S. 'In order to appreciate the Self described in the Upanishads one needs simple methods. Many such descriptions have been given in the past, but more light can now be thrown on the subject. The states of consciousness experienced in deep sleep, dreams, the day-time state, spiritual awakening, Samadhi, etc., are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas from people, situations and events. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a 'passing show' always remains the same. This Observer never registers any change in itself; if any modification appears, then this must happen to the individual ('Ahankar') since change is its very nature. . . .

For example, pure gold always remains gold while its uses and shapes and forms are liable to many modifications (variations). The sky remains the same, while storms, clouds, rain and snow keep on changing our view of it, and yet do not affect the sky in any way.' (One experiences this vividly every time a plane takes us up above the cloud ceiling). 'The waves of the sea cause no loss or gain to it, the waves are only on the surface; at the bottom of the deep blue sea there is complete stillness. In the same way all these passing shows of the Gunas, do not change the Atman, but only provide variety in its appearance.'

20th October: 1970

Letter from D. to R.:

I had a brief talk with His Holiness about how you have tried to explain Param-Atman to your group – “The sum total of all the Atmans of all individual living beings, past, present and to come is Param-Atman.”

He said: “In a way, you can think like that. But you might add that: (1) Param-Atman is the Atman of the whole Universe – living and non-living, conceivable and inconceivable; (2) Atman is the image of the Param-Atman, possessing all the properties of the Param-Atman, just as a mental image of the sun can encompass all the properties of the sun such as heat, light, etc.; (3) The Atman, in association with the Buddhi (impure) , may seem to be under worldly bondages (such as the mind-body machine), but Param-Atman is beyond all such things.”

19th November: 1970

Answer to letter from D.C. dated 7th November:

Q. In the children's game of seeking the treasure, or hunt the thimble, with the child blindfolded, we say 'hot' or 'cold' to guide them to the treasure. In my search for the Atman I would like someone to say 'hot' or 'cold' to guide my steps. My passion is increasingly to recognise the Atman.

S. In the Antahkarana of each person, there lives the Param-Atman along with the Jiva-Atman for the purpose of guidance. Therefore, we get a guiding voice from time to time when we are in difficulties. In order to hear that Inner Voice, we should pray to the All-knowing Atman in solitude with a settled mind. Then an answer to bring us face to face with success is sure to come forth. To those maintaining a special relationship with the Param-Atman, the Param-Atman sometimes reveals Himself in a special form in the external world. Therefore, what we have to do is to take guidance in our Antahkarana from that immense source of power, the Param-Atman, with fullest concentration of mind and humility. If we do so, then the question of hunting for treasure with eyes blindfolded would not arise.

You (DC) have said, "But my efforts seem ineffectual. Like digging a very large field ... It sometimes seems the spade is not enough – a tractor is required!" On this point he observes as follows: After all, the field you speak of is by no means too large for the Buddhi. All fields are smaller than Buddhi, all lying within

the area of Manas; then both of them, together with the power of Atman, appear small and we feel small in every field of life. If instead we feel that we are great, we are infinite and that all the possible fields come within our own Manas and Buddhi, then our Manas and Buddhi give an appropriate decision on each problem at once. But this is possible only if we do not try to restrict or to imprison the Manas and the Buddhi in this small body.

Atman contains Buddhi, Buddhi contains Manas and Manas contains the body. But ordinarily people think the other way round, i.e. that it is the body which contains all that. Here lies the mistake. The moment we take a broad view of our Manas and Buddhi, the whole universe goes into it.

The manager of an estate gets on well only by listening to the voice of the proprietor. Similarly, for a body-bearing individual, it is beneficial to recognise the Voice of the Param-Atman that lives in his Antahkarana. People endowed with higher intelligence recognise the Voice of the Param-Atman. Ordinary people can get this guidance through prayers and solitude. And this guidance can solve the hardest of problems. The small spade you mention is after all a child of the “big iron”. If it calls for the help of the “big iron”, that help would not be denied in view of the relationship between the two. Then the small spade would do the work of the tractor all right.

A story illustrates how great powers come to the help of the small in the event of a firm determination:

A pair of birds lived by the seashore and laid their eggs on a high rock. One day huge waves arose and washed the eggs away. The birds were very much pained at this uncalled-for act of cruelty on the part of the sea, and they made up their mind to fill it up. They took a little sea water in their beaks and dropped it on land, and took a little sand from the land and dropped it into the sea. They did this from morning till evening and day after day.

One day a great saint named Agastya appeared there and he asked them how they hoped to fill up the sea with such attempts. The birds replied that, since the sea had swept away their children without any provocation, they would go on trying to fill up the sea all their life. Even after death they would wish to be born again and again to continue that work till it was completed. The saint was surprised and impressed with such a firm determination on the part of those two tiny birds. As he had supernatural powers to dry up the sea, he ordered it to return the bird's eggs at once. The waves deposited the eggs back on the rock.

This is just a fairy-story. Now we shall examine what represents what here. The saint was Param-Atman, The birds were man. The sea was the world. And man's true and firm aspirations were the eggs. When man (the birds of this story) sets himself on a true and unshakeable purpose, then the Param-Atman (the saint) gives him full assistance, and problems (the waves of the sea) bow down in submission.

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January 1971:

(R. records):

After I had been pretty roughly treated by the Shankaracharya on this last visit, by about our seventh talk I began to be really tired of myself and with my lack of practice, so I said:

“At a very early talk with you eight years ago, you said, ‘After constant meditation and work on oneself, the adept starts to realise that a man is not just flesh and bones, but he is also Antahkarana (unity), he is Consciousness, and he is bliss. When he has fully realised this, everything becomes very simple for him. Whatever he does, the way he moves, the way he talks, is quite fitting to the dignity of Atman (Divine Self). But this stage comes only after full Realization!’”

I went on to say:

“Though this has stayed with me ever since, why has this simple aim taken more than eight years to achieve in spite of all the wonderful help received? Is one just too stupid to succeed?”

He said cheerfully:

“Those eight years have not been wasted, for a good thing has now become known. In this work on Spirit, there can never be a time-limit for full Realisation. It depends on the state (at the outset) of the Antahkarana (or nature) of the individual. If that is ready-made at a high level then Realisation is very quick, otherwise the realisation will not come about until the cleansing process is complete. It may well take 10 or 20 years for some people.

What takes the time is that the knowledge of such ideas must first be appreciated enough to put it into practice – such as the idea which was taken by your Buddhi (i.e. intellectually only) that the flesh, bones, Manas and Antahkarana are not the Self. For these relate to the five sheaths described by the first Shri Shankara in ‘The Crest Jewel’, and anyone will have to penetrate through these sheaths and detach one after another by faithful practice in order to realise the Self.

Unless this theoretical knowledge, which at most is just good information, is put into constant and continuous use, it never becomes real or realised Knowledge. And only when that Knowledge is realised does the individual become Realised.

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7th March 1971: Ashram talk:

His Holiness said that teaching a thing without knowing it fully does more harm than good. In Allahabad there is a mushroom growth of Sanskrit schools, but there are not enough good teachers to man them. As such, they only depopularise Sanskrit instead of popularising it. Thus people stop going to them, resulting in more teachers than pupils. Such schools harm the very cause for which they exist.

A whole lot of rubbish is contained in our very behaviour. One whose behaviour is like that, how could his destiny be otherwise? We should improve our behaviour first. We should meditate (contemplate) on the Param-Atman. This would make us clean internally and externally. People would think of you as they see you. If they see you clean, they would think that you are clean, and they might try to learn cleanliness from you. The qualities of a Self-realized man are given in Chapter XIV, v.19–27 of Bhagavad-Gita. But before reaching that stage, practice is required. A new recruit in the army cannot march in step with others, but after practice he can march in step with a large contingent of soldiers without any difficulty at all. We need not worry too much if we go wrong. What is important is that we should not form a habit of going wrong. Once we decide not to go wrong again we are well on the right path. Once we apply ourselves to the Param-Atman with a single-minded devotion, we reach the stage of a Mahatma in no time and attain permanent peace – as stated in Chapter IX, verses 29–31 of Bhagavad Gita:

- (29) I am the same to all beings; to Me there is none either hateful or dear. But those who worship Me are in Me and I too, am in them.\*
- (30) Even a bad man, if he begins to worship Me with single-pointed devotion, is seen to be good; for he has formed a holy resolution.
- (31) Soon does he attain virtue and eternal peace. O Arjuna, know for certain that no devotee of Mine is ever destroyed.

If once during our life-time an unshakeable faith in Param-Atman is established, that is, that we belong to the Param-Atman and Param-Atman belongs to us, then we are out of reach of all harm. At that stage things change their properties for us, a harmful drug becoming harmless. This is how a cup of deadly poison given to Mira, a perfect devotee, lost all its poisonous properties in her hands. We know that substances change their properties during a chemical reaction, i.e., on a chemical plane. Then why can this not happen on a more subtle plane, where much more powerful forces come into play? Bhakti can do all that. It cleanses you, purifies you, decorates you, and presents you before the Param-Atman at your best.

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\* Note: Compare St. John, chapter XV:

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me and I in you ... If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

Translation of talk sent to DBC, May 1971

Gokarna says in the Shrimadbhagwatan: “This body is only flesh and bones; cease to be attached to it.” Transfer your attachment to the Atman. Because Atman is part of the Param-Atman, there is no difference between the two. Both are able to cut worldly bondages.

This body is the vehicle and the Atman is the rider. Treat the rider separately from the vehicle. It is not easy to do so. It requires years of practice. (see p.34) We practise by thinking this body is God’s property, not ours. This mind is God’s property, not ours; everything is God’s, and nothing is ours. In this way we free ourselves from all attachments, all constraints. Again, this concept is difficult for those who think that ‘I’ is the physical body.

A Mahatma wished to live in complete solitude in order that he could meditate undisturbed at all times. He recounted his wish to a rich man. The rich man had an isolated rest- house deep in the forest, rarely visited by mankind. He offered the rest-house to the Mahatma, and in addition provided a young servant to look after his comforts.

The young servant looked after his master so well that his heart was moved. He asked the young servant if he was content with his life, and if he could do anything to bring him happiness. The young man replied that he himself was content and happy, but he was afraid that his dead father had not achieved Self-realization as he was frequently appearing in his dreams. He asked the Mahatma for a remedy.

During the ensuing nights the Mahatma was haunted by the problem of the young man’s father. One evening the boy went to a neighbouring village to attend a marriage feast, telling the Mahatma that he would not return until the following morning. So the Mahatma locked up the house and went to bed. Now, the young servant’s bed was beside that of the Mahatma and lay empty. The Mahatma’s mind was filled with thoughts about the young man’s father, and the failure to achieve Self-realization. He was quite unable to sleep in peace.

The marriage feast was over by midnight, so the boy returned to the house immediately instead of waiting until the morning. When he got back, he climbed over the wall and through the window and fell asleep on his own bed.

At 3.30 in the morning the Mahatma awoke and saw the bed was occupied. In the darkness, he thought that the occupant must be the boy's father (who had been haunting his son's dreams because he had not achieved Self-realization). He recited holy Mantras and sprinkled blessed water over the body, but the boy did not wake up as he was in so deep a sleep. Now the Mahatma became frightened out of his wits. He opened the window and jumped out in order to get away. In his haste he fell over with a heavy thud. The noise awakened the young servant. He chased after the Mahatma with a heavy staff thinking that he was a burglar escaping. Eventually they recognised each other before many blows were sustained, and the misunderstanding was cleared up.

In such a way, just a momentary thought, stealing unconsciously into the mind, will make its home there; then it appears later at some inopportune moment to cause much mischief. Reels and reels of such thoughts from thousands of years (in many life-times) are lying printed on our minds. They will not let us have peace, unless we develop the same attachment towards God as we now have towards the world.

Our desires (wishes) are like so many strings that pull us toward the world. (Mr. Ouspensky: 'Man is a marionette pulled by invisible strings.') Let this pull be toward God instead of toward the world. The method is to think (establish the attitude, see) that everything, including one's physical body and mind, belongs to God. Whatever actions we do, including eating, drinking, reading, writing and looking after our duties, should all be dedicated to God.

(cf. Gita, ch.9, v.26: He who offers to me with devotion only a leaf or a flower, or a fruit, or even a little water, this I accept from that yearning soul, because with a pure heart it was offered with love.")

This is the meaning of Bhakti (Yoga of Devotion). Done in this way, each and every action of yours becomes an act of devotion and so becomes an act of worship to God, instead of being a worldly engagement. The worldly ties then are broken, and the presence of God supervenes.

In the absence of such a mode of thought, there is the world, and with the world, come all our troubles!

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Address by His Holiness at Allahabad: 7th May 1971

Vyasa says, “I have made a critical study of the Vedas and the Shastras several times. The gist of all that, as I found, is that we should think of the Param-Atman all the time.” As soon as any other thought enters the mind, we are in the grip of “Maya” or “ignorance” (illusion) which catches hold of us and takes us very, very far away.

The “Jiva” or our “self”, is a part of the Param-Atman, and it has come into the world for the sake of discovering joy. But, instead of that, it has fallen into the trap of ignorance

(Avarāna). Ignorance is forgetting the Reality. It is the root cause of all the troubles

associated with the world. Therefore the biggest of all the troubles is to forget the Reality.

And, by forgetting the Reality, we mean forgetting that only Param-Atman is real and the sensory world in unreal.

A schoolboy was given a new penknife by his parents for his birthday, and he took it to school with him. Usually he carried his penknife in his satchel, but that day he wore the new one in his belt. But when he wanted it, he forgot that it was in his belt and searched for it again and again in the satchel. Not finding it, he thought his classmates had stolen it, and reported the theft to the class-teacher. The whole class was punished. This is how a most ordinary instance of forgetting causes big trouble.

All worldly objects are like children’s toys – a toy elephant, a toy motor car, a toy locomotive, etc. They must be treated as nothing more than toys. Disappointments and trouble will be our lot if we treat them as real. Therefore, all troubles which we encounter in our life are due to treating the world as real.

A village landlord was counting some rupee coins which he had earned that day. His little children happened to come and asked for the coins to play with. He asked them to wait till the next day, when he promised to give them better and brighter rupees. The children agreed, and he went to a potter and asked him to prepare 500 earthen rupee coins, painting them bright. The potter promised to deliver them the next day.

The next day the landlord went again to the potter and asked, “Now, would you give me my 500 rupees?”

The potter replied, “Not today, if you do not mind. Please collect them tomorrow.”

Other customers standing there had heard this conversation between the potter and the landlord. The landlord called them to his house and said, “You have heard our conversation. I asked the potter to let me have my 500 rupees and he said that he would do so the next day. I am going to file a suit for recovery of this amount and you stand witness.” The suit was filed and the potter lost the case. Thus unreal rupees caused some real trouble.

Similarly, unreal worldly objects cause real troubles, and these end as soon as we know the Reality.

During a juggler’s show, a juggler strewed the ground with currency notes, while he himself was on contract at Rs.50 per day only. People were amused to see such a profusion of currency notes, but none took them seriously as they knew that they were of no real value. All worldly objects around us are like that.

The first of the Upanishads (Isa Upanishad) begins: “Whatever lives is full of the Lord. Claim nothing; enjoy, do not covet His property. Then hope for a hundred years of life doing your duty.” They do not ask us to live a hundred years of misery. However, our life does become a life of misery because of our feeling of Attachment to worldly objects, (objectives – see p. 91) and this feeling of attachment to worthless things is the root of all miseries. The world as it really is has no miseries at all. It is we who manufacture them by harbouring an attachment to worldly objects.

Attachment means to consider as “ours” what really belongs to God. Our body, our house, our wealth, our son, etc. Give up this feeling and you get rid of all troubles.

Do not think that the world around you, i.e. your house, your money, your body, etc., are unsubstantial. Rather, it is your feeling of attachment to them that is unsubstantial. Whatever is happening around you is right, but what is wrong about it is the view you are taking of it. If you could correct your view point, you would be happy.

The world is a great show which God is staging around you in the shape of the universe. But it is a mere show. Your birth is a show, your death is a show. Actually there is neither birth nor death. Know that, and you would be happy.

The common outlook is that the world is everything and that Param-Atman is nothing. It is a crime to hold this view, and the punishment for it is to be imprisoned in this physical body. You cannot be happy while undergoing a term of imprisonment.

Our mind has the property of thinking of something or other all the time; it cannot remain idle. If it does not remember the Param-Atman it would think of the world. Remembering the Param-Atman leads to happiness, and thinking of the world leads to unhappiness.

It is true that people do not find it easy to hold the Param-Atman in mind. The reason for that is lack of practice. As long as the ability has not been acquired, there would be difficulty. But the ability can certainly be acquired.

A baby cannot eat solid food in the beginning because the ability has not been acquired. But this ability comes quite easily later when he tries (after he has some teeth!).

Acquiring the ability to think of the Param-Atman is as easy as that.

Someone went to a Mahatma and said that he would like to serve him, but he added that he must have something to do all the time as he could not remain idle. The Mahatma asked him to go and cut a long piece of bamboo. When he did so, he asked him to fix it in the ground. This done, he asked him to climb to the top of it, then come down, climb again, come down again, and so on. Thus he had constant work to do.

Similarly, keep the mind occupied, otherwise you would go mad.

You have a mind, you have a body, and you have intelligence. Let the mind be trained to remember the Param-Atman, let the body do service to Him, and let the intelligence discriminate.

Hari – Om – Tat – Sat

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Evening talk by His Holiness in Allahabad: sent 11th June 1971

There is something or other in all of us which is special or outstanding. For example: some are intelligent, some are unintelligent, some are strong and some are weak; some are learned and some are ignorant; some are rich and some are poor.

Each should try to please God (or serve God, or worship God, as the case may be) with that attribute chiefly in which he excels. This is the path of least resistance. It is sure to work, as it has always done in the past.

Sudama was the poorest of the poor. He worshipped Krishna with rotten rice only and that, too, was borrowed, because he was so poor. But this worship worked and Sudama got great wealth in return.

Little things are no longer little when consequences become great. In fact, all great things begin from a little:

A tiny seed of Babul (a thorny tree in India) will produce a large thorny tree at first, and this will produce innumerable others till the whole place becomes full of them and nobody can move through without getting hurt.

Similarly, a little wrong action can cause much harm, and a little good action just the opposite.

Kubja, a hump-backed woman who lived in the time of Krishna, worshipped Krishna with sandalwood paste only, but with total sincerity. All her troubles disappeared, and the hump also went. She became a beautiful woman. Her action was small, but her sincerity was great. Therefore this miracle happened.

Similarly, many stories in the Puranas illustrate the fact that even the lowest can reach the greatest heights.

The method is, do what each of you is meant for, and do it in a spirit of service to God. Let eating, drinking, sleeping, bathing etc., all be dedicated to God. This is the correct worship, and the correct Bhakti.

Shabari, an uneducated woman of the Ramayana time, did it for 100 years with full faith that the personified God would visit her hut in the jungle one day, and it actually happened. Rama did go to her hut during his exile. Though illiterate, her dedication was of a higher order than that of even Mahatmas. Therefore, he visited her hut, and not theirs.

In the epic Mahabharata, we read that Krishna declined the invitation of Duryodhana though he was a king and had arranged a royal dinner for him, and went instead to Vidura, who was only a low-born person and could only entertain Krishna as a poor man.

A strong and deep affection lives in our heart for our son or father or wife; yet we go about our normal business and do not recite their names all the time. This is exactly how we should keep God in our mind (heart) and go on doing our duties at the same time.

Do your normal duty in service to God and worship of God. You can reach God through it. But if you think that your own duties are no good and take up other people's duties because they appeal to you as better, you would lose your way and ruin yourself. Thus, doing your own duty and dedicating it to God is the golden rule to peace and happiness.

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ALLAHABAD 1972Introduction:

During the Christmas holidays (1971) R. had put together a number of recent sayings of the Shankaracharya in a form which he could learn by heart so as “to hold the Universal Self (Param-Atman) in memory all the time”.

Having found great benefit from this practice, he issued these sayings to senior people In London and New York in the form of a “New Year Programme 1972”.

At the same time a copy was sent to our interpreter (R.L.D.) at the Ashram, who translated it into Hindi and read it to the Shankaracharya, who listened very attentively and sent his comments.

The Programme and the reply (14th January) are here given together with a previous question (21st December 1971) and answer (also 14th January) on the same subject.

## NEW YEAR PROGRAMME 1972

In desperation at my own inability to practise what I preach, I recently found a shortcut which, so far, works well and is surprisingly simple. It could help anybody who desperately wants to take Step 2 of the Ladder – Resolution – both those who have temporarily given up meditation or those who seem to be meditating happily, but deeply feel the need to take it further.

This programme can help the two half-hours but does not take their place. It is meant for only a few people; if there is anyone you feel would benefit from its use, let me know.

We are given so many transient ideas that they pass us by, and we need just one idea to carry with us all the time. This “shortcut” consists in committing to memory certain sentences from the Shankaracharya’s recent talks designed to make us remember Param-Atman all the time – and particularly last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

We consist of an outer nervous system (Cerebrospinal) through which we carry on our daily life, and a quite separate inner nervous system (Autonomic). To achieve unity, we have to bring both together under the control (supervision) of the causal level in the forebrain (Soul) – and this is a good way to sow a seed there which can grow into a flowering shrub.

The method is to learn by heart a couplet (say) every week. This is most easily done by repeating with full attention the first sentence eight times, then the second sentence eight times, and then both together eight times, so that the two are “running in one’s head” to the exclusion of all other thoughts and desires before one goes to sleep; then one will wake up with them still in mind. There is no special order; choose whichever couplet appeals to you, continuing with it for some time until a change is needed.

Definition: Param-Atman is the Atman of the whole Universe – living and non-living, conceivable and inconceivable.

Summary: Vyasa (who wrote the Bhagavad-Gita) says:

“I have made a critical study of all the Scriptures (available to me) several times. The gist of all that, as I found, is that we should hold the Param-Atman, (Universal Self) in memory all the time.”

Similarly, this single idea can include for us all other books and Scriptures.

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(a) The first four couplets refer to the Inner life:

1. In the Soul (Antahkarana) of each person there lives the Universal (Param-Atman) along with the individual Self (Jiva-Atman) for the purpose of guidance.

2. Therefore we get a guiding Voice from time to time when we are in difficulties.

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3. In order to hear that inner Voice, we should pray to the All-Knowing Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind.

4. Then an answer, to bring us face to face with success, is sure to come forth.

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5. Therefore, what we have to do is to take guidance in our Soul from that immense source of energy, the Param-Atman, with fullest concentration of mind and in all humility.

6. This body (physical, subtle and causal) is the vehicle, and Param-Atman is the rider; regard the rider as separate(distinct) from the vehicle.

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7. Our mind has the property of thinking of something or other all the time; it cannot remain idle.

8. Remembering Param-Atman leads to happiness, but thinking of worldly things leads only to unhappiness in the end.

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(b) The following four couplets can bring this same idea into one's daily activities in the outside world:

1. The states of consciousness which we experience are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas – in people, places, situations and events.

2. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a passing show, always remains the same.

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3. What to ordinary people are different shapes and forms, are to a Realized person, all manifestations of one and the same Param-Atman.

4. What he sees then, around and within himself is Param-Atman, and not the transient mirage (illusion) which we call “the world”.

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5. Once you win over the Param-Atman by love, only then do you get all you need for a happy and profitable life.

6. But Love is unconditional, and there is no place in the kingdom of Love for demands and rewards.

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7. A strong and deep affection lives in our own heart for wife or son or parents; yet we go about our normal business without reciting their names all the time.

8. Each of us should try to serve the Param-Atman with that attribute chiefly in which we excel.

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14th January

Answer to letter from R. dated 21st December 1971:

S. I have heard the thoughts expressed by you in your letter about the way you have adopted in order to remember Param-Atman all the time. Your thoughts are highly commendable. The couplets you have selected\* as bases for further progress are very meaningful and unique in a way. Instead of saying anything else, I would therefore send you only this message in token of my good wishes that by going deeper and deeper into the source of your inner energy you are doing a great service to the uplift of your own self and that of your circle.

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\* New Year Programme 1972.

3rd January:

Q. I find it comparatively easy to think about the Param-Atman particularly in connection with the Laws of Nature in the universe and in man and in seeing that all that is going on in the outside world, whether it looks good or bad, is a part of One Param-Atman. But I would greatly appreciate help in developing a love or devotion to the Param-Atman through what I suppose would be the practice of Bhakti. My capacity for love seems to be such a feeble thing and it is shown in the way I keep making demands upon you as our Teacher, instead of feeling for you and your wishes as Shankaracharya and living up to the Holy Tradition.

Reply 14th January:

S. You have asked for help in developing love or devotion to the Param-Atman through the practice of Bhakti, stating that your own capacity for love seems feeble. You should not worry on this account. Rather, you should remind yourself that the Path of Love is that very path on which Param-Atman is pouring all His favours and blessings all the time. Love is not an action; it is a feeling. Love and True Knowledge are two names for one and the same thing, which is a natural manifestation of the Atman, and it comes to the surface spontaneously when the Antahkaran concentrates. Then you get the 'feel' of it.

Through your beneficial and holy efforts, let your own fullness see the fullness of the Param-Atman, and let the practice, the practitioner and the object of practice merge together to form one single identity. Then the world as such disappears and the Param-Atman appears in its place. This summarises the philosophy of Bhakti through love.

13th January: Mela:

Fear of Death

The previous speaker spoke about the fear of death, which haunts the mind of even the bravest of people.

His Holiness picked up the same theme. He said that everybody fears death – whether great or small, learned or ignorant; but there is no such thing as death. The so-called “death” is nothing but a natural corollary of the phenomenon of birth. The only way to avoid death is to avoid being born. It is not possible to be born and not to die.

Actually the individual Self, living in the body, is immortal. It gives up an old body in order to put on a new body, just as we give up our old clothes and put on new ones. If we are happy to discard an old garment and put on a new one, there is no reason to be unhappy when the Self discards an old body and adopts a new one.

An Indian went to Africa. When his money was finished there, he went to a money-lender to ask for a loan. Just then, there was a death in an Indian family living in that neighbourhood and the people of that family were weeping. The money-lender asked the Indian why his countrymen living in that house were weeping. He replied that it was a custom in his country to weep when there is a death in the family.

The money-lender asked again “And what do you do when there is a birth in the family?” The Indian said, “Then we rejoice.”

The money-lender said, “Then if you are the sort of person who rejoices when receiving a thing but weeps when you have to return it, I certainly won’t lend you any money!”

S. contd: A person who dies has never written back to say what happened

to him after death. Therefore, the only course open to us is to take authority from our Holy Scriptures on subjects relating to death and thereafter. We can find a lot of information there on these subjects. The following teachings from the Bhagavad-Gita tell us how to deal with death:

- 1) Forget the past. Do not fear the future either. Devote the present to the Bhakti of the Param-Atman. A devotee of the Param-Atman never perishes.
- 2) For two half-hours a day give up all duties and obligations; surrender yourself completely to the single care and protection of the Param-Atman. He will save you from all evil consequences, and therein would lie the end of all your worries.
- 3) One who sees Param-Atman in everybody and everything, and sees everybody and everything in Param-Atman, Param-Atman never becomes obscure to him and he never becomes obscure to Param-Atman.

We fear death because, under the influence of Maya, we have forgotten ourSelves. And it is this forgetting of the Divine Self which makes for us all the troubles we get. It is not a God who is the maker of our troubles.

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16th January: Mela:

His Holiness referred to the story of Shri Sukadeva, the son of the famous author of ancient times, Shri Vyasa.

Shri Sukadeva was a child prodigy, who had already attained Self-realization. So, as soon as he could, he started running towards the jungles.

But he was the only child of Vyasa, born to him in his old age, after he had waited for an issue all his life. Seeing him thus running away, Vyasa was grief-stricken and he ran after him crying, “ My son! My son! Come back!”

But Sukadeva went ahead without looking back. A river lay on his way. Some women were bathing in it undressed. They saw Sukadeva passing close to them, but they did not pay any heed to him and continued to enjoy their nude bath. Subsequently Vyasa also reached there pursuing Sukadeva. But on seeing him, the women hid themselves behind trees and put on their clothes hurriedly.

Vyasa asked them why they did not mind the presence of his young son when they were without clothes, and why clothes became necessary before an old man like him. The women replied, “Your son saw his own Self in us. You are old, but the sexual hang-over which responds to the difference between a man and a woman still continues to affect your vision”.

Thus, if we see differences in worldly things – ‘this is this, that is that’ instead of seeing everything as part of our own Self, then there would be things which we like as also things which we dislike. The conflicts between these likes and dislikes lead to unhappiness.

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A person who practises Bhakti, uses his speech for expressing the properties of Param-Atman, and his eyes for seeing Him everywhere. He is reluctant to use his organs otherwise.

In this way he is practising Bhakti everywhere, whether he is in a jungle or at his house. You are listening to this talk about the Param-Atman. This is also Bhakti. But no action by itself is Bhakti. Cover every act with the thought (Spirit) of Bhakti, and every act becomes an act of Bhakti. Thus growing crops on a field, sitting at a shop selling things, etc., and all such activities can be converted into Bhakti if they are done with a spirit of service to the Param-Atman.

Bhakti is a power of the heart. Let this single power of Bhakti drive all your actions, just as a single electric main drives all the machinery in a factory.

When we give up the world in quest of Bhakti, the giving up should be mental also, and not merely physical. A physical sort of giving up, without a corresponding mental attitude and with the mind still harbouring desires, is hypocrisy. It does not contribute to happiness.

In the mind of a busy householder, the idea of Bhakti is sometimes lost sight of in the midst of daily engagements. The way to reverse this is to read holy works like the Bhagavad-Gita (or the Gospels). This should be done as a daily routine by anyone who wants to practise Bhakti.

A rich man used to go to a Mahatma, but he used to talk to him about his household affairs only. The Mahatma asked him the reason, and he replied that it was so because his household people loved him very much; therefore they were always uppermost in his mind. The Mahatma went to his house one day and gave a sewing needle to his wife. He said to her “Your husband seems to be planning to take all his things with him when he goes into the next world. Tell him to carry this needle also if he can for my sake. I shall need it there for sewing my torn garments”. When she told this to her husband he understood the truth about the worldly belongings.

So, you should try to hoard that which you can take with you, i.e., Bhakti, and not that which must be left here, i.e., the worldly possessions. Transfer your attachment (allegiance, affection) to Param-Atman. This is Bhakti. Under the influence of Bhakti everything undergoes a transformation. Poverty becomes riches, poison becomes nectar. There is pain and suffering in the world only as long as faith in Param-Atman is not there.

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20th January: Mela:

Some fifteen to twenty hundred thousand devotees had their dip in the holy waters of the Ganges, and earned a profit. A trader is happy when there is a profit. But what about a loss?

In this “trade” of life, all of us want a profit and want to avoid a loss. The first two verses of the Isa Upanishad tell us the way. They say:

1. The entire living and non-living world constituting this universe should be taken as covered by one single Param-Atman, i.e., as a manifestation of one single Param-Atman. Make your living in this world with the things thus provided to you without desiring money from anyone else. But Param-Atman does not assert his ownership over what He gives to the world (like air, water, food, etc.). Similarly, while using them for your living, you should not consider them to be belonging to you and yourself as the owner.
2. Desire a hundred-year-long life thus lived, and full of action. There is no other way to avoid a coating of evil while leading a human life.

According to the Bhagavad-Gita Arjuna refused to fight the war of Mahabharata and Krishna persuaded him to do so. He explained to him that even in case he does not heed his advice, his own nature and temperament would force him into battle. In this way our natural habits and tendencies compel us into good and bad actions. Therefore we should try to change the evil tendencies in our nature to better ones.

People often complain that although they have been practising Bhakti or meditation over a number of years, yet they do

not appear to be deriving any benefit from it. This is because their tendencies and nature have not changed.

We should bear in mind that whatever the Creator has given to the world, He has “given it up” to the world. He no longer asserts any ownership over it. We also should cultivate the habit of using and enjoying it as His gift and not our own property. This attitude will correct our evil tendencies, and then the practice of Bhakti or meditation will begin bearing fruit.

It is not gold or worldly possessions which are evil; only ‘identification’ with them.

Once four businessmen set out on the business trip and they were carrying fire-arms for protection. They met a Mahatma on their way. He warned them not to go that way as there was danger. They did not listen to him and said that they were well-equipped to face any danger. As they went further, they found a brick of gold lying on the ground. Rejoiced at their find, they wrapped it up in a piece of cloth with the idea of dividing it among themselves.

As night fell, two of them went to a neighbouring village to bring some food, two staying behind. When they had gone, those staying behind felt tempted to have the brick to themselves and conspired to shoot the other two when they returned with food.

On the other hand, those who had gone to the village had a hearty meal in an eating shop. While returning with food for the other two, they also succumbed to the temptation of having the brick for themselves and conspired to do away with the other two. Therefore they mixed poison with the food they were taking for them.

When they returned with the food, the other two shot them dead. But they were hungry and so at once devoured the food brought for them. They fell asleep, never to wake again.

Next morning the same Mahatma passed there on his way to the river for his daily bath. He found the four lying dead, and the brick of gold wrapped in cloth. He threw it into the river so that it might not do further mischief.

This is how we meet mishaps in our daily life owing to our reasoning being polluted by evil tendencies. If we consider (regard) and use everything as a gift from the Param-Atman, and thus practise Bhakti, then our reasoning becomes clear and we can lead a long and happy life as expressed in those Upanishad verses.

Evil associations cause evil tendencies in our reasoning and they, in turn, result in evil actions. Good associations cause good tendencies and result in good actions. We should all try to achieve a 100 year-long-life full of happiness and useful action by following this teaching of the Upanishad. Such a life would be a good worldly life, good for us and good for the world.

Once I had occasion to address a meeting of prominent scientists at Delhi. I found a slogan displayed there reading: “We search for light in the darkness”. I liked the theme and devoted my address to that subject. We also look for light in the darkness. But the sun’s light fails to show up the world. When the mind gets still, a true Light shines and we see the world in its true colours.

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23rd January: Mela:

In the ageless continuum of time, it seems so futile to take account of all the events that go on making and unmaking themselves in an unending chain. A little while ago we were preparing to set up this Mela. Now we are preparing to wind it up. Thus, anything that begins has to end, and anybody who comes into the world has to go.

Many people say that there is no rebirth. Actually each birth writes down the destiny of death, and each death writes down the destiny of birth. The Gita says that there in neither any “birth” nor any “death”, but it is merely a cycle, an apparent change, that is going on all the time. One who sees a changelessness in all the changes that are going on sees correctly.

It is a body that is born and dies. The Atman itself which inhabits the body is birthless and deathless. It is enough to understand only this much of the subject, because in trying to understand everything we often end by understanding nothing at all.

The Param-Atman also incarnates, but unlike ordinary people, His incarnation is Divine. Why His birth is Divine and that of ordinary people not divine is due to associations.

Two examples will illustrate the difference between the two:

An ordinary person, on joining State service, had to sign an undertaking that he would do his work honestly and impartially. On the wall of many offices a picture of Mahatma Gandhi is displayed with one hand holding a walking stick, and the other hand with its five fingers raised in the gesture of blessing people. But dishonest people

point towards this picture and say, “Look! Gandhi is showing five fingers to indicate that one rupee bribe is not enough. Let it be five at least!”

Such would be the behaviour of an ordinary person. Now we will consider a Divine incarnation:

The child Krishna once wanted to go out grazing cows along with the other boys. Everybody dissuaded him as he was too young to remain out the whole day, but he insisted on going. Yashoda, his mother, then gave some sucky sweets to the boys and asked them to give them to him when he feels hungry, to save him from hot sun and fatigue, etc. Then the boys and Krishna went to the bank of the river Yamuna to graze the cows. There Krishna appeared to be eating the sand of Yamuna instead of the sweets; and he did not stop when told not to indulge in that dirty habit.

In the evening, when they returned to the village, they complained to mother Yashoda about Krishna’s mischievous behaviour. She questioned Krishna, and he denied point-blank. Then she caught Krishna with one hand, took up a stick in the other, and threatened to beat him. Krishna said, “Mother, just peep into my mouth. If I ate sand, you will surely see it there.”

Yashoda looked into Krishna’s mouth. First she saw only his lovely pinkish lips and pearly white teeth. But soon she began seeing in it the whole village – their own house – another Yashoda holding another Krishna – another earth and another sky – mountains and rivers – and everything. She was completely nonplussed. Seeing her frightened out of her wits, Krishna withdrew the vision and assumed his former appearance.

This is an example of a Divine incarnation.

Comment on “Incarnation of Param Atman” in letter 6th April:

Why the incarnation of Param-Atman is divine, but that of ordinary people not divine, is due to association:

1. Param-Atman incarnates of his own free will. Ordinary people are reborn as a consequence of their own actions.

2. Param-Atman incarnates to attract people towards Him and for their good. An ordinary person is reborn to reap what he has sowed.
3. Param-Atman incarnates with the Maya under his full control. An ordinary person is under the control of Maya all the time.
4. Param-Atman is not bound by the results of his actions. An ordinary person is bound.
5. Param-Atman is beyond pleasure and pain to which an ordinary person is subject.

. . . . .

Pain is inevitable for embodied beings but one could be free from suffering if one gives up attachment.

We should not try to renounce suffering, but to bear it. If we incur a debt, we should repay it rather than renounce it.

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Mela talk contd:

In order to recognize and experience Divine manifestations, a devotee has to renounce everything else. By renouncing everything he comes to possess everything.

Another story illustrates this:

A Mahatma, Swami Vishuddhananda, was living in the Himalayas. The Maharaja of Tehri, then a Himalayan state, was greatly devoted to him. One day he asked the Mahatma, “Master, what are the indications of a person who has renounced the world?”

The Mahatma kicked him out of the cottage saying, “Get out. Carrying all the dirt of the world on you as you do, you have no business to ask questions about the indications of a renounced person.”

The Maharaja went out, but stayed outside the cottage the whole night. At three o'clock in the morning the Mahatma chanced to come out and asked, "Who is sitting there?"

"The one whom you kicked out," said the Maharaja.

"Do you see the indication of a renounced person now?" said the Mahatma. "He is entirely fearless, so that he can kick out even a Maharaja."

Since a fully Realized person renounces everything, people think that he must be undergoing great sufferings since he may be without even the bare necessities of life. But he does not feel any sufferings. He feels all the comforts of heaven with the little he has got or even nothing at all. Pain and suffering are two different things. Pain is a bodily experience, while suffering is mental. All embodied beings must be subject to physical pain. The Atman, however, sees the pleasures and pains of the body but is not subject to either. Pleasures and physical comforts are meant for those to whom worldly enjoyment is the end-all of life. A Bhakta (devotee) cares little for them.

If we run after the pleasures of the physical senses, the advantage of being born human is missed. Animals and birds also eat, drink, build nests, reproduce, look after their offspring, etc. But the advantage of a human body is that you can open your inner eye and see your real Self. Birds and animals cannot do this.

The ancient books say that there are 84 thousand million kinds of living beings, and a being (Jiva) goes on wandering from one

form of life to another till Param-Atman, out of pity for its sheer misery, gives it the body of a man. If you fulfil the purpose of having a human body in this life, then you have made a success of it. Your visit to the Mela is meant for this purpose only.

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22nd April (D)

Further comment 23rd January Mela talk – Divine Incarnations

S. The incarnations of Param-Atman are such that they have powers to alter the whole course of events and of Nature even. Thus they can only be rare like Lord Krishna, etc. They can be total or partial.

When He reveals Himself in the Antahkarana of a Bhakti, it is a case of revelation rather than of incarnation. But it can be called a partial incarnation also in a restricted sense. Such cases, however, should be carefully discriminated from mere hallucinations in weak minds.

29th January: Mela:

This body is like a big town, the habitation of many. It contains a whole world of living creatures inside. They all possess life and desire to live. Some appear harmful and some useful. They are constantly being kept in a state of dynamic equilibrium, and this equilibrium keeps the body fit. Any disturbance of equilibrium causes disease; then compensating forces of nature arise which tend to set it right. Similarly, when the balance in the creation is upset, then the forces of Param-Atman come into play to restore it.

Nature is constantly striving for perfection, never attaining it. Man also, as part of Nature. One who is ill, tries to get well; one who is weak, tries to get strong; one who is poor, tries to get rich; and so on. Thus, in every situation there is dissatisfaction, and there are corresponding efforts to overcome it and to improve things.

But the more we try to improve, the worse everything seems to get. We say we have progressed, but we also say that the olden days were golden days. Similarly, today's day, which seems full of causes for dissatisfaction, will become a golden day of tomorrow. Gandhi considered his days' taxation to be excessive and launched an agitation against it; but now those days' taxation is considered very light compared with today's'.

The reason is that increase of material facilities do not contribute to happiness; instead it is taking a rational attitude

that promotes happiness. If our planning is good, then even fewer facilities would be enough to create happiness.

Our efforts, however, are more towards looking good externally and less towards being so internally. Trying to look good outside , but staying bad inside is wilful deception.

Such attempts can only result in harm.

Once a well-dressed young man came to me and posed as a son of the Prince of Avagarh. He said that he was stranded at the railway station and he had lost all his luggage, and he wanted some loan, promising to return it by telegraphic money-order as soon as he got home. I told him to make himself comfortable at the Ashram first and have his meal, and that we would consider later what we could do about it. By chance, an employee of Avagarh State also happened to be in the Ashram at that time. I asked him if he knew the man, and he denied all knowledge of him. The impostor then disappeared on some pretext and never returned.

The world, on the whole, is like this. People put on good appearances outside and keep ulterior motives within.

Trying to be good to our own fellow beings is the first thing to do. One who does not serve his fellow beings is far from serving the Param-Atman. The Param-Atman gives us a decent human body at the time of our birth. But, by the time it is taken back we have polluted it by all sorts of unholy actions, done during our lifetime.

In this connection the saint and poet Kabir has said:

“Everyone was given a shawl (the human body) to cover himself with, but all made it dirty during use. But Kabir also used it, and doing so carefully, he returned it neat and clean.”

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9th March:

Extract from letter to Dr. D.C. from R.L.Dixit.

Enquiry about the orange-coloured robes worn by Mahatmas – whether this colour attracted Sattva.

The question made His Holiness smile and he said: “Yes it attracts Sattva”. Orange, and more precisely yellow, is the colour worn by Lord Vishnu. Devotees also wear this colour for its purifying effect on the mind.

Sannyasis who have renounced the world, however, wear hematite colour instead of orange which contains a greater proportion of red than orange. This is because it is the colour of fire. Fire burns all worldly things whether good or bad. Not only that, but it also changes everything into its own shape – fire, and fire is a great purifier. Similarly, a renounced person burns all his worldly impulses whether good or bad, transforming them all into his own pure Self. The fire in this case is True Knowledge. This fire of True Knowledge burns away the entire false illusion of the world, “so this is good, this is bad”, and all that is left subsequently is pure Reality.

The wearing of the orange or hematite colour is meant to remind the wearer constantly of his duty, just as wearing a uniform reminds a policeman or a soldier of his duty.

4th April: Discourse

Context – Verse v, Ch. VIII of Bhagavad-Gita:

“He who frees himself of his body remembering Param-Atman at his last moment, gets into Param-Atman undoubtedly.”)

The Holy Scriptures lay down that at all times – in the beginning, in the middle and in the end – all over the past, the present and the future – one should always think of Param-Atman, because we do not know when the end may come. But we cannot do this without forming a habit. However, it is wrong to imagine, as some people do, that they would form this habit in their old age. If we do not cultivate this habit in our younger days, it is difficult to do so when we are old. But if you only manage to remember Param-Atman in old age, though not when you were young, He would be satisfied even then!

This world wants your body. Well, serve the world with your body. But Param-Atman wants your love only. If you love Param-Atman, it would be Param-Atman who would then begin to serve you. Then Bhagavad-Gita says:

“Through the inner ear of a Bhakta (devotee), I make my way into his Antahkarana and sweep it clean.”

Facilities and conveniences increase desires, ultimately creating unrest. Therefore Param-Atman takes away the facilities from a Bhakta and he becomes a poor man:

A Mahatma lived in the jungle, and his hut was so small that it could accommodate only three persons. Once a severe storm with heavy rain came. A lone traveller stood outside the hut, exposed to wind and rain. The Mahatma

called him in and asked him to sit down. Then a second man came and he was also called in.

Then a third man came who was rather bulky. Now all had to stand up since there was no room for four people to sit there. This third man was rich and he offered to build a big room in place of the small hut. so that many people could sit in it.

The Mahatma drove them all out, saying: “You want to demolish the hut which gave you shelter. I do not want your bigger room, for it would only increase the crowd around me, distract me from my work, and increase my desires.”

Facilities lead to desires and desires mean death.

There are troubles on every path. So the path of Devotion (Bhakti) also has its own troubles; but these troubles carry us forward and form the basis of fresh uplift. By bearing these troubles the Bhakti strengthens, we form the habit of constantly remembering Param-Atman and are thus able to remember Param-Atman at the time of death. A Bhakta is desireless, peaceful. He has no enmity. His vision is uniform. He sees Param-Atman in everything.

A good housewife serves well all the guests that come to her house. But she does so out of her regard for her husband only. Similarly we should serve everybody, but out of our regard for Param-Atman.

Radha meditated on Krishna, and Krishna meditated on Radha. As this meditation deepened, Radha turned into Krishna and Krishna turned into Radha. These transformations from one to the other took place every instant, until the difference between the two vanished. Similarly, through the deepening of Bhakti (love), the difference

between Bhakta (devotee) and Param-Atman vanishes and it is no longer possible to differentiate which is which.

Therefore, thinking of Param-Atman, we should be able to stop worrying about the world – (at first for half-an-hour, but later for always).

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15th April: Ashram talk

Poverty blissful

S. Poverty is a bliss. Because if Bhakti develops in it, the image of Param-Atman begins to live in the Antahkarana, just as the image of an object lives in a mirror. And a man thus possessing the image of the Almighty in his heart could no longer be called poor. But a poor man who entertains desires is certainly miserable, while a poor man with no desires at all is happy.

Alesko

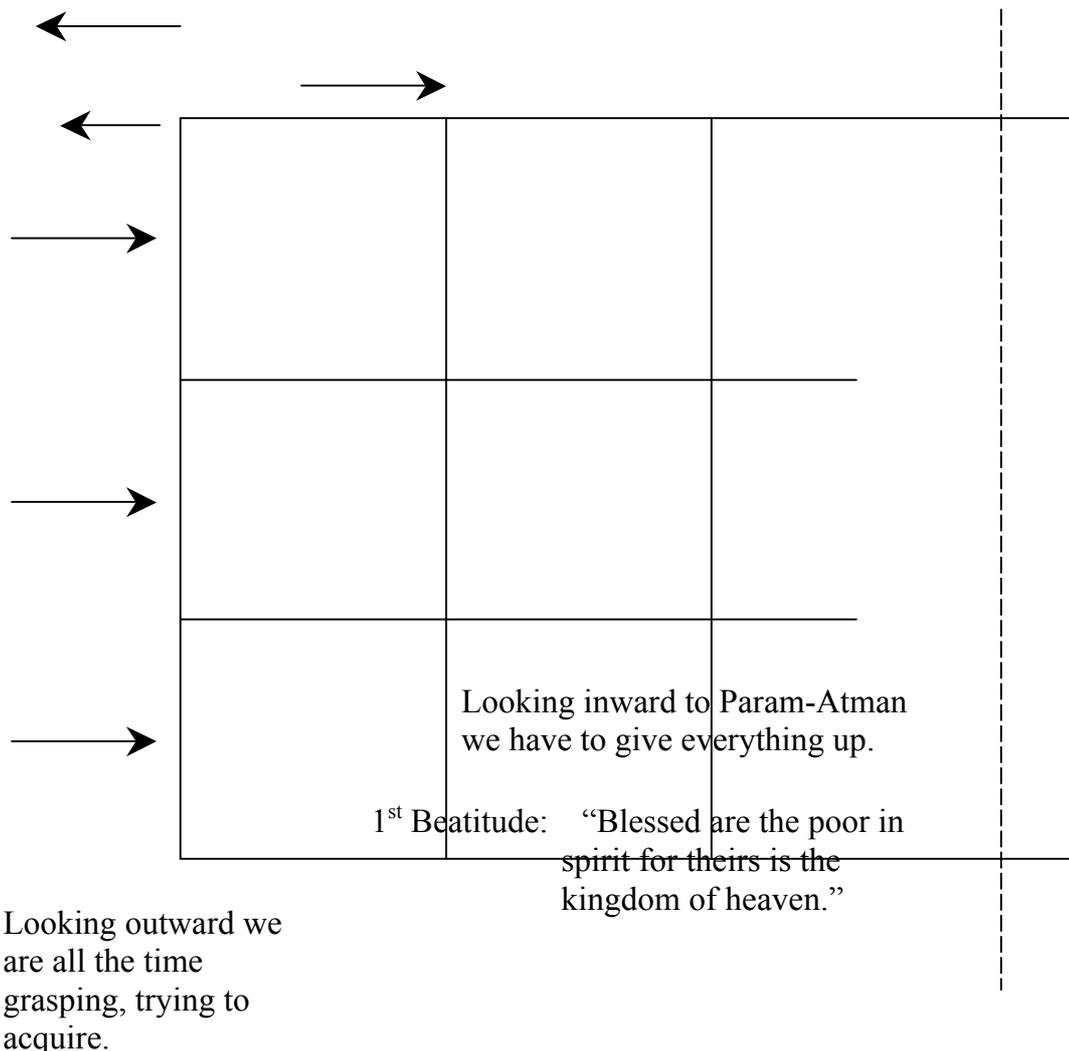
In olden times there lived in China a man called Alesko (I do not know correct spelling). He kept nothing with him except a piece of gunny to wrap his body. The king needed a person to manage the affairs of his kingdom who had no personal ambitions. When he heard about Alesko, he wanted to try him and sent his men to call him. They found him playing with turtles in a pool of mud.

“Lucky man,” they said, “your days of poverty are over. His Majesty, the King, has summoned you for appointing you his prime minister.”

Alesko said, “Is it true that His Majesty keeps a turtle wrapped in a sheet of gold and worships it every day?” “Yes, it is true.” “Is that turtle alive or dead?” “It is dead of course.” “Would any of the turtles you see here like to be kept like that as long as it is alive?” “No.” “If even an animal would not give up his natural surroundings for being kept in gold, how do you expect me to do so? That turtle is dead, as you say. Similarly I can also surrender my liberty only when I am dead.”

S. concluded: Taking recourse to flattery in order to escape poverty is to kill one’s own life.

(contd.)



From Ashram talk of 15th April 1972

Where the Bhagavad-Gita prescribes “giving up”, it also explains how to give up. Before taking action an ordinary man always tries to assess what he is going to get out of it – his expected profit. But a Realized man undertakes it as a matter of duty, with no desire for its consequential benefits.

What we have to give up is the desire to benefit from our actions – and not actions themselves.

Doing one's duty

His Holiness then spoke as follows:

Where Bhagavad-Gita prescribes “giving up”, it also explains how to give up. What we have to give up is the desire to derive benefit from our actions – and not actions themselves. If we give up actions but continue to indulge in desires, then we would simply be pretending to give up. Before undertaking an action, an ordinary worldly man always tries to assess what benefit would accrue to him as a result of that action. But a Realized man undertakes it as a matter of duty, with no desire for its consequential benefits:

Guru Deva and language

When the preceding Shankaracharya went to Lucknow, people told him that that town possessed an Urdu culture and spoke Urdu language. He replied that it would not matter. He would do his duty, irrespective of the extent of the benefit people derived from his visit.

S. continued:

Before trying to do good to others, we should first try to improve our own selves.

We cannot save a drowning man if we cannot swim ourselves.

Correct attitudes make real wealth. One who possesses this wealth is never poor.

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17th April

Question from Mrs. Sundararaj:

What is it that really divides the physical from the subtle, the subtle from the causal, and all those three from Pure Consciousness itself? Is it energy? Is thought in the subtle body? Does everyone have a physical, subtle and causal body? If the energy of matter in a chair is raised, does it become subtle? What is the difference between matter and consciousness? What has all this got to do with Self-realization?

Regarding the three worlds we live in, I have often wondered about the difference between the physical and subtle worlds. The other day I tried out a recipe. I found that at every step of making the dish, it was not going as it was meant to. Could I take it that the recipe was in the subtle world and the act of cooking was in the physical world? It just struck me at that time how easy it was mentally and how different it was physically!

Reply 2nd May:

His Holiness says that physical, subtle and causal are just three states in which a Being lives. The dividing line between them exists as a natural phenomenon but it is not energy. Thought is in Buddhi. Everyone has a physical, subtle and causal body.

(contd.)

The question about raising the energy of a chair is too hypothetical as the three states are not interchangeable.

The difference between matter and Consciousness is that of cause and effect. The object of knowing all this is that it is helpful in attaining Self-realization.

The making of the dish was not going as it was meant to because the Buddhi was not helping enough. Apart from Buddhi, the factor of Prarabdha<sup>\*</sup> also comes in with regard to success in doing a thing. If Buddhi and Prarabdha both support a physical act, things go as desired and success is inevitable.

Prarabdha: (Y.V.D.) That portion of Sancita Karma that determines one's present life.

Sancita Karma: The sum-total of all actions done by the Jiva during countless previous births, out of which a portion is allotted for every new birth. ("Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.") Prarabdha manifests itself as "luck" or "destiny", good or bad.

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\* (see also pp.31 and 92)

8th May(D)

R.'s question: I must know something of the meaning of the word 'Prarabdha' which I have never heard before. If you cannot find an equivalent English word, could you give me some small description or example of its use?

Ans. (D.) I could not find an exactly equivalent English word for the Sanskrit word "Prarabdha" used by H.H. and I did not attempt to explain it as you had told me once that you already had a good Sanskrit English dictionary in your library which I thought might explain it better than I could. It belongs to the concept of rebirth and as such, it might make no sense to those who do not believe in any such phenomenon.

Out of the many countless good and bad acts done by an individual in all his past lives, Prarabdha is that parcel of them, for reaping the consequences of which his present life is intended. It is an extraneous factor to govern our life, in addition to what we do now, which is called "Purushartha"\* Purushartha and Prarabdha going together make for success in an enterprise. Prarabdha is inescapable and it would search us out wherever we may be, just as a calf can search out its own mother from among a hundred cows. It manifests itself as what we call "luck" or "chance" or "destiny, etc.

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\* Purusartha: (Y.V.D.) Human effort; individual exertion rightly directed; the 4 ways: dharma, artha, kama and moksha; ideal of mankind.

dharma: way of living prescribed by the sacred scriptures.

artha: ?activity; way of householders (wealth).

kama: conquest of desires, passions, lusts.

moksha: release; liberation from wheel of birth and death; direct experience.

R.'s further question: Recently I told the story of the parrot once more and his master, the intellectual man, who did not put into practice his instructions. Following this, I tried to carry out certain of His Holiness's instructions to me. Next morning, I woke up with a clear and happy feeling as if I saw the whole of my ego or personality, like that of the intellectual, as from the point of view of the liberated parrot sitting in the tree!

I still have the feeling and keep noticing that there is an incessant commentary going on in the mind about what one sees – approving, disapproving, etc. Is not this a useless function of the mind which could be made to observe impartially like an interpreter?

S.'s Ans. The incessant commentary going on in the mind about what one sees – approving, disapproving, etc. – is certainly a useless function of the mind. One method to avoid it is to observe impartially, considering yourself as separate from the mind, as you yourself said. The other method is to keep the mind engaged on good thoughts only, so that it gets no opportunity to entertain wrong ideas. This amounts to keeping the mind under control as you would a servant. Let your mind be the servant and you its master.

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17th April: Ashram Talk:

The Brahma Sutra of the Vedas has ten entirely different commentaries to explain what is Param-Atman and what is not Param-Atman. One school of thought considers the Atman as the ultimate Reality; another says it is Shakti (power) which is so; and yet another that the ultimate Reality is absolutely void – a total absence of everything. Some say there is nothing except Param-Atman, while others say there must be two – the Param-Atman and the Jiv-Atman. No two sages have spoken alike. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu propounded the doctrine of Kirtan while Shankaracharya pleaded for Adwaita (there is nothing but Param-Atman). Thus one feels lost in a jungle of diverse opinions and wonders what to do. The solution is to follow the example of great men (and, like them, find out for oneself/obtain Realization for oneself).

There are endless suppositions about the world and about Param-Atman. These relate to the practical life as well as to spiritual life. Shankaracharya has accepted both.

All these diversities of thought are together recognized in the verses of the Vedas. They recognize the infinite, formless Param-Atman as well as the finite, personified Param-Atman. Hence the Vedas are a complete repository of all ideas, accommodating all shades of opinion and leaving out nothing.

A monkey sat on the roof of a railway carriage, and when a passenger put his head out of a window, the monkey quietly descended, pinched his cap and climbed back on to the roof. The bystanders advised the passenger to give the monkey something to eat, in order to get his cap back. When he passed up a banana, the monkey held the banana in one hand but hung on to the cap with the other. When offered a second

banana, the monkey took it but dropped the cap on to the railway line where it was irretrievably lost!

We are all temperamentally greedy like the monkey, and there are innumerable temptations in the world to attract our greed. The force of these attractions is irresistible, and we continue to fall victims to them all the time. These forces are desires, sex, anger, attachment, greed, vanity, jealousy, which keep on beguiling us and we find it difficult to escape. The only way out is renunciation. (See p. xiii) It looks difficult but it comes with practice. Just practise transferring your love of these attractions to Param-Atman.

Attachment to worldly things is the root cause of all our troubles, for we little realise that it is all false, and that we are bound to get deceived if we take worldly things seriously. All hopes are false. Once your mind gets set in love for Param-Atman, the world would cease to attract you.

Somebody was feeding a Mahatma. He asked the Mahatma, "How do you like the taste of this food?" The Mahatma replied, "I feel as if I am not eating at all."

It is the body that eats, while we feel that we eat. This is a delusion. It is the engine that takes the fuel, not the driver. And the food taken differs from case to case. A baby's food is milk, and an adult's food is grain, a snake's food is rats, and so on. Just as the body's nourishment is food and water, similarly Manas's nourishment is holy intention, Buddhi's is thought, Atman's is joy, bodily organs' is legitimate gratification. Giving this nourishment to each in proper doses is leading a controlled life. The advantage of a controlled life is that it would be what you want it to be.

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28th April (J.) A question put by letter to interpreter Jaiswal in Benares:

Question: ... In our System we were told that a man consists of body, soul, essence and personality, but the fact that these are just servants of the ever-present Consciousness – the Real ‘I’ –wasn’t mentioned. Going through the teachings of His Holiness in your translations, it seems that his use of physical body and of Samskar or essence is very much the same. It is possible that what was called ‘soul’ is equivalent to the Antahkarana, but is there an equivalent word for contrasting personality as that part of our psychology which we acquire during our passage through life for the essence which is what we are born with? There was only one conversation very early on where he agreed with what I called essence and personality. Can you remember the word that you translated personality – is Ahankar the nearest to it?

Reply from Jaiswal 12th May

... your enquiry about the ‘personality’ of a being: The usual term used is ‘Pratibhā’\*, but this is used here in opposite sense to what Mr. Ouspensky or the School treats it. But I must say (as I did originally when this term was first raised) that I am not sure as to how this term is really used in the School terminology. Pratibhā is essence and personality and individuality all put together. This is from where a man speaks, thinks and gesticulates. Sometimes Ahankara (pure and impure) is also used.

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\* Pratibhā: (Y.V.D.) Intelligence; splendour of knowledge; intuition. Contains idea of power that removes the obstacles on the path of Sadhana.

Sadhana: Self-effort; tool; implement; spiritual practice.

Sadhu: Pious or righteous man; a Sanyasin.

Vyaktitva is another term in use, but this in more as Individuality. But there are no terms used with the sense of mask, though it is fully recognised that people put up different acts. His Holiness says that in this creation all have to take up certain acts in this great Drama, but the question is how truly and faithfully one does it. If all acts are played for the sake of play only, then most of it is good; if it is done for some gain, then it does seem like what the School calls 'personality'.

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5th May:

Mr. Colin Lucas's question: (relayed by Jaiswal to Shankaracharya)

“Even if one read all the wonderful descriptions which the Shankaracharya has given us of the Param-Atman; even if one read everything that the great teachers of the past have written too; even then, surely, one would be left only with one's own interpretation of their words, one's own concepts and mental images of what the Param-Atman is like?

But if, through the meditation, one were to reach that place within one where the Param-Atman dwells, is it not true to say that one would have direct experience of his being? Instead of inventing thoughts and concepts, one would directly be what the Param-Atman Is? And would not this direct experience of his being come to one through the sound of the mantra, so that at any time during the day or night the repetition of this sound would bring it back again?”

His Holiness's reply 16th May:

It is true to say that one would have direct experience of his being if one were to reach, through meditation, that place within one where Param-Atman dwells. It is also true that a direct experience of his being would come through the sound of the Mantra.

Regarding the varying thoughts and concepts, in the beginning we have to accept them in order to get over them later on. As one passes through them and goes ahead with the help of his own power of reasoning and understanding, only then a final stage is reached

where a confusion of ideas ceases, otherwise not. For example, the Upanishad says that after realising Param-Atman the holy Scriptures are useless, and they are also useless if we do not realise Param-Atman. However, their purpose is to increase our interest in meditation, to promote our zeal in attaining our object, and to make us more and more capable of experiencing and realising.

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8th August (D):

in reply to R.'s letter giving story of 'London tramp' by Mr. Cheeseman (see below) à propos of the remark by the Shankaracharya 'that the subtle level often creates dreams out of unfulfilled desires and secret fears experienced by the individual, thereby working them out of the person's system...'

“What you have just read made me think of a story about a tramp who slept in Hyde Park and was happy because he always dreamt he was sleeping in the Ritz Hotel. Someone, who was interested in him, booked him a room for the night in the Ritz. Next morning they asked him how he had slept. 'Very badly,' he replied 'I spent the night dreaming I was sleeping on a hard bench in the Park!' ”

H.H. liked it and spoke on that subject at some length. The substance of what he said is:

The story is very useful in understanding the working of the human mind (Manas). It is never satisfied with what it has, and always desires the opposite (something quite different). While a poor man envies the comforts of the rich and wants to be rich too, a rich man is weary of his anxieties and envies the carefree sleep of one who has nothing. A sick man worries about getting well (only making his sickness worse), while a man in good health worries that he may get ill.

The mind (Manas) also has a tendency to live more in the past and the future, and less in the present which is much more important than either. This combination of dissatisfaction with the present and the perpetual desire for the opposite (something different) in the future causes perpetual unhappiness. The remedy is to see, with the eye of True Knowledge,

the same thing in everything, and that same thing is Param-Atman. Then the outlook becomes balanced and unified, unrest giving place to tranquillity.

In our day-to-day actions (on the physical level), however, as apart from our thoughts, things should be taken as they are, and not everything as the same.

. . . . .

7th September (in reply to R's letter of 17th August):

You have asked what word His Holiness used for “mind” when he was commenting on the dreams of the London tramp, whether it was Manas or Buddhi. He used Manas.

Buddhi, is used in a different context.

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8th August:

The following question was sent by Mr. Rabeneck direct to interpreter Dixit and answered by the Shankaracharya on August 8th:

Q. When looking at the street, buildings and people under a changing sky or at clouds and trees, there comes a feeling of all this being moved by Param -tman. Such a unity in my perception may last for about half-an-hour.

When complete silence comes in Meditation there is a vague feeling of an expanding and dissolving flow: there is unity for several minutes.

But in life there is no feeling that events in which “I” am involved are a “passing show”. An obstinate sense of separateness and of being the “doer” remains. Is ‘keeping the Param-Atman in mind as much as possible’ all one has to do, or should there be more order and discipline introduced on physical and subtle levels, and how?

Answer:

S. When looking at the street, buildings and people under a changing sky or at clouds and trees – and also when there is a vague feeling of an expanding and dissolving flow – what you experience is the WORLD. And the world has three stages, viz.: creation, maintenance and destruction.

When we wake up from a sleep, the (sensory) world stands up before us as it is. When we perceive a dream, however, it is a dream-world that we see. When we go into deep and dreamless sleep, then everything of the world merges into the Self, and only that

Self is all in all. That is why we try to merge everything into our own Self in our day-to-day life.

The advantage of this would be that the thought of the past and of the future would weaken and you would find yourself in a special state of Self-consciousness. As this practice deepens, you would see the states of waking and dreaming more and more alike. With your eyes open or shut, it would be the same world before you. A condition of sameness would possess your heart. The mind (Manas) would shed its burden and become filled with joy instead, A feeling of perfection and limitlessness would supervene.

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In sending us this question and answer Mr. Rabeneck wrote:

“You will see yourself from the enclosed copy how fully and clearly he has answered my first question. And then he describes the further steps: what to expect and what to aim for. In fact, it is a programme of work for a long time to come.”

3.

ALLAHABAD 1972Tuesday afternoon  
3rd October1st Audience:

F.R. Introduction: Though we bring you the united love and gratitude of many people in different countries and also questions from some of them, we want to put (each of us) our own questions first. So I will begin by introducing my wife who is the only one you have not met in person.

(He brushed aside my feeble words about her and spoke his own mind as follows):

S. Refers to your introduction. He remembers one day you speaking about the accident which occurred to your daughter, and you mentioned “my wife is like a lioness, and she made it possible to bear this calamity with a good face”. His Holiness is very pleased to see the lioness here, and he wants her to watch and listen to these discourses and to get the atmosphere here. It is worthwhile to catch some of the spiritual influences which are available here. Although practically everything has been discussed before in our talks, it is so very nice to be together and to refresh the memory once again and see each other. He had not expected that Mr. Allan would arrive so quickly (as the letter mentioned he might have to follow later), but he is very glad that he has come with Dr. Roles, and he offers his blessings.

J.R. (scarcely able to speak from emotion at his memory of our daughter's fatal car accident in 1961):

Q.1 I would like to thank His Holiness for allowing me to come and I would like to ask him – How to improve the quality of my attention, by better concentration in Meditation, as I feel this would be a way to increase my capacity of love for the Param-Atman?

S. Although individuals do feel a separate identity, in reality there is only one identity, and that is the Param-Atman. In our Antahkaran, the inner body, and the subtle body, we have this individual Being, and because of ignorance and other influences it seems to feel a difference from the Param-Atman, and that is why it wants to unite with the Param-Atman. For this unity of the individual and the Universal it seems as if the effort is being made by the individual himself. The individual, if indeed he does anything at all, only removes the impediments which block his vision of his unity with the Param-Atman. In fact, the movement is only from the Param-Atman's side. It is Param-Atman who reaches out to the individual Himself. The love or devotion should be developed by removing the impediments and that, of course, is possible through the meditation and the attention which one brings into one's life. This, in a way, removes the separate identity of the individual which is composed of his name, his form and his so-called nature. All these things have got to be given up for the real Unity or for the real Love towards the Param-Atman. The effort is, of course, made by the individual, but he makes little effort. The greater effort is made by the

Param-Atman, just as a small being or child has small legs, so he can take only small steps.

The big man can walk quicker and cover more ground. The same applies to the individual who is a very small being, and the Param-Atman which has no limit. This is how the unity of the individual and the Param-Atman should be made.

S. continues: All individuals are the Absolute themselves, and so are you. It is only a question of realising that one is the Absolute. To realise that, one has to do away with those impediments, and to illustrate this he tells a story about the lion cub.

Once, in the forest, the lioness who had several cubs went off to search for food, and while she was away one of the cubs strayed and got into the middle of a flock of sheep. The cub followed the sheep and the shepherd, seeing the cub with the sheep, kept him. The cub behaved like the sheep because of the company of the sheep. The shepherd thought that if he remained in this forest, then one day the lioness will roar, and the cub, hearing the roar would remember it was a lion and would attack the sheep. So he took the flock with the cub to another forest where he believed there were no lions.

One day, a lion did roar in this other forest, and all the sheep ran away, and the cub also tried to run away. The lion, in lion language! – asked the cub to stop, and said, “Why are you afraid of me? There is no need – you are not a sheep – you are a lion like me. If you are not sure I can show you.” So he took him to a pond and the little lion saw in the reflection that he had the same face and same characteristics as the one who roared. Then the lion asked him to roar with him, so he learnt how to roar and the whole personality and individuality of this little lion was completely changed and he started roaring like a grown up lion.

All our efforts in the world are learning the language of the world, which is like the language of the sheep and the life of sheep. By good company – the company of Saints, and through the

discourses, we learn to give up the language of the world and take to the language of the spirit. Once we have learnt, and have seen how the saintly persons, who are much nearer the Absolute, how they conduct their lives – we can also be like this young lion and start behaving like a proper lion, because we are all proper lions by nature.

(2) M.A. The remembrance of Param-Atman during the day is an increasing comfort and nowadays everything is more pleasant. Even unpleasant things seem less important than before. However, one feels on a dreamy plateau where, because of the pleasant life, the need to keep moving on the path is less sharp. One is not complaining about the increased happiness, but though one feels the greater presence during the day, one's Meditation does not seem deep enough and one seems more caught in a dreamy phase – can His Holiness advise?

S. One of the fundamental characteristics of life on this earth is the worldly illusion of being the independent doer – of having free will. It is very difficult to maintain that individuals are the doers of anything, for the whole creation is a manifestation of the Absolute who is the real Doer. He has made His whole show in such a beautiful pattern that it keeps changing from one moment to another, and must keep on multiplying also. The whole thing is going on by virtue of the creative impulse given by the Absolute; He is the independent one, He is the free one, and He is the real Doer.

Part of the show is our human nature with its capacities of memory and thinking which, if one takes the load of the 'past' and the 'future' upon oneself, makes the journey hard and treacherous; for the 'past' and the 'future' appear terribly big, and it is very difficult to walk along the Path if one carries this load. "If such and such actions were taken," we think, "then a particular result could be achieved"; or "if I hadn't acted the way I did, I could have saved myself from these effects," One should always keep oneself light-hearted and free of that burden.

In fact, the load is on the mind (Buddhi) itself; the physical body has nothing to do with it; but because the mind governs the physical body, the physical body also suffers.

One of the best examples (analogies) is the shadow play of puppets. There is someone holding the strings and moving them, but they appear to be moving themselves and to be the real doers.

The whole of creation is very much like a puppet show, with the strings being held by somebody else.

In another simile he gives the example of the cinema show, where the film is being shown on the screen and the people keep on looking at these moving pictures. On the screen you see mountains, buildings, seas, and fights, love scenes and religious scenes. All types of scene are being enacted on this screen. Some people watching are like the puppets, and they get animated by the scenes.

One should be able to see the things which are happening in the world – but only as a silent observer. See all the pleasures on the screen, but don't be involved and moved off course.

All the exciting things which are shown on the screen do not colour the screen itself – the screen is pure white. It has no colour of its own – it just reflects the colours which are thrown on it.

So should we become like a screen where every part of the activity takes place – is allowed to take place, but we should become pure white and not be stained or dyed with any of the colours of the world. It is not one's business to have any ambition or desire to initiate a new line of action. The flow of the Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) should be experienced dispassionately.

(Reply to a remark by Lady Allan:) You mentioned the dream state – there are five states – the Samadhi state, the awakened state, the dreaming state, and then the deep sleep, and the fifth one is unconscious state. All these five states belong to the mysterious creative art of the Absolute. Each of these states is part of the manifested creation for the pleasure of the Self. In fact each state is a useful state for one or another purpose. There is nothing to choose between one or the other. One doesn't have to choose anything, but stand at the middle and see both sides, the outer and the inner. Or stay in the present and watch the passing life – the play of 'past' and 'future'. Each state is part of the Absolute, and one does not have to select one of these situations. One has to become the impartial and silent observer of whatever happens, may it be Samadhi, waking, dream or sleep. If that is achieved, it is beyond all these states of the world we live in, and in effect everything is Sat-chit-ānanda – the Absolute. Even the most ordinary (hum-drum) work, such as digging, then gives bliss or Ananda.

With the idea of enjoying the whole creation with this impartial attitude one might ask where is the sense of being good - what is good and bad? – the question never gets resolved. In fact, there is neither good nor bad – it is simply our nomenclature. It is our preference for one or the other which makes one good and another bad – our impertinence which makes one good and the other bad.

If one could keep to this state of silent impartial observer, one would see that none of these things exist. One stays in the present, and one acts as the occasion demands and the whole thing passes. Wise men once discussed this question of deriving Ananda out of all the multifarious aspects of the world. The discussion led to the conclusion that one should not entangle oneself with either side (physical or subtle), but should simply observe, because the Absolute is in everything. This creation is a most efficient mechanical organism which is functioning according to the laws (by the wish) of the Absolute, so one should always see the Absolute behind all these passing phases.

One of the listeners at this discussion went away, and on the road saw an elephant coming along. He remembered that the Absolute was in everything, so he thought 'the Absolute is in the elephant, so surely it won't harm me.' The mahout on the elephant's back kept shouting to him to get out of the way, but the man on the road took no notice and the elephant took him up and threw him on one side. He went back to the wise man to say he had been misinformed – he thought the elephant was the Absolute, and he was the Absolute and the Absolute would not harm the Absolute in any way – but he did'.

Then he was told, 'You forgot that the driver was also the Absolute. Because you did not obey the Absolute when he shouted to you, you were punished. You, in fact, selected one of the two; do not select, do not show prejudice, do not make impertinent preference, then everything will be clear and one will easily find one way without any hindrance.'

Once Swami Rama Tirtha, who was from the Punjab, saw a black adder in his path; it was a puff adder with his hood open. He just smiled and laughed and said. 'Oh my God, you have come before me in such a frightening shape – but, forgive me, I don't like your shape this time so please go away.' And the puff adder went away.

This shows how to behave as an unprejudiced and silent observer who has no duality (no mental division into 'good' and 'evil').

(3) R.A. His Holiness has told us that the Mantra, the meditator and the Object of Meditation (the Universal Self) should all become One. I should like further guidance on this. With me at times the meditation stops, my personal identity ceases to exist and there is only Universal Being. Is this what His Holiness refers to?

S. In meditation the meditator, the act of meditation and the Mantra should all become One: should be united in One. This state of unity can only be recognized by one effect during the meditation that there is no knowledge of any sort derived from such a deep meditation. If there is a feeling of the Universal Being that would mean that the ultimate stage has not yet been reached because there is some knowledge. However great and universal and refined these feelings may be, the meditation is not complete. The unity is

very much like the great ocean undisturbed by waves and where the bottom of the ocean and the surface are all one.

One might enquire what is the usefulness of this stillness where there is no knowledge, and what do we do after we have meditated? In the unified state where there is no meditator and no act of meditation, one is directly connected with the creative force of the Absolute. It is a resting point for the Atman, and for the Atman alone, to come in direct contact unimpeded (particularly by the subtle body which is the instrument of knowledge). So one would see that in the unified state there is no knowledge, not even of the Universal Being. The subtle body is what recalls all these differences and transitions, but the unified state is the real state of the Atman, and one should reach that. Then, when one comes out of meditation, one would see that during all the activities of the world one does not identify oneself with mind, hand, foot, etc. One remains the Atman and gets all these servants to work for the Atman.

Take the labourer who works in the field under a supervisor. The supervisor does not work. If the supervisor works there is no supervision and chaos would follow.

So in order to become the real supervisor one should meditate and become the master of all the labourers, through Manas, Buddhi and Chitta. These are the labourers, and we must become still to get the most out of these labourers in our organism.

His Holiness concluded by saying that during the discourses we must keep a constant vigil and probe the questions and the answers and pursue anything that is not clear.

Wednesday, 4 October

2nd audience:

(4) F.R. About the ladder of Self-Realization. Twelve years ago when, after a year of meditation, we came to Rishikesh, some of us were speaking only of the 7th step! Later, at Lucknow and here, I kept asking about the 4th and 5th steps. Now I want to ask about the first steps. We get many good impulses and we make plenty of good resolutions, but we don't carry them through. I want the energy and the will-power to carry through that resolution from which one never goes back – that the Universal Self should be all in all during each day as it is when one first wakes from deep and dreamless sleep.

S. You asked about the good impulses and all the good resolutions which come in one's everyday life and then are not usually carried through. One has to differentiate between two types of good resolutions and good impulses. One is born of the mind (Manas) and is the effect of time and place, certain situations or certain influences which come from outside. We seem to be in those situations, so we resolve to do certain things. The other is born of understanding (Buddhi), which comprehends that in such and such a situation we have this much energy or capacity; and so, with this capacity, we resolve to take up an activity or any one of the good resolutions, and then we carry it through. We just do not drop it because times have changed – the atmosphere is gone or our energy

is dissipated. So one has to decide by one's own reason as to whether the resolutions to be taken are worthwhile, whether they can be carried through; and then, once having decided, we should keep to those resolutions.

(5) F.R. According to His Holiness' answer yesterday, it is the Param-Atman doing and we are just trying to prevent something coming in between the Will of the Param-Atman and the rôle we have to play?

S. In a telephone exchange there are thousands and thousands of lines available, and people in different places have their telephone installed; but the lines are available only for the asking. You have to ask for the number to get it.

Of the same sort is this Manifested Nature (Prakriti), which in threefold – Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic – one only has to ask for any of these Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic influences to be given to one and they would be available. The individual is also composed of these three facets of the Prakriti and so is the whole universe, for the Param-Atman has manifested this creation through these three Gunas. So the process works automatically according to the Law of Cause and Effect. If one asks from the heart for anything, it should be available; and one can carry on according to one's good resolution provided one really continues to want it.

One will sometimes see that situations are not favourable for one's good resolutions or good impulses and they will fail – not because of any fault of yours to carry them through, but because present circumstances do not allow them to be carried through, and one is handicapped by the situation which is not under one's control.

The Absolute, who governs everything, knows properly what is most necessary for certain situations, so if the resolutions are not being carried through, one should accept the situation as part of the Grace of the Absolute, even if it is in opposition to one's resolution. In due course things will change and go the way you want. To have good resolutions is not a part of worldly desire – it is of the Divine nature. One must wait until the proper turn of Prakriti makes circumstances available for the individual to carry through his resolutions.

(6) F.R. This answer relates to my own desire to cease from teaching others, but I remember a higher example when His Holiness had once said that he did not want to be in public life for more than twelve years, but circumstances forced this upon him. (No comment).

(7) R.A. His Holiness says we should ask from the heart – how do we do this?

S. There is a simple solution to the problem of knowing whether the resolution comes from the heart – a resolution coming from the heart stays with the heart. Any resolution which is lost in time is not from the heart.

(8) R.A. But in the example of the telephone exchange, His Holiness said you only have to ask and the line will be made available to you, provided you ask from the heart – this is not quite the same as resolution, is it? We form questions in the mind, but how do we

communicate in this way from the heart?

S. The good resolutions from the heart spring from within, and that which springs from within keeps on reminding one again and again. The other type of resolution, which flashes into the mind, is the result of certain external situations and associations. When these associations and situations are gone, then those resolutions are also lost in time. So one has to see if some idea or resolution is reminding one again and again in spite of all difficulties and opposing situations; then this is proved to be coming from the heart and must be kept going and, in fact, you will be forced to keep this going simply because it comes from the heart.

As an example: if you have to go to a far distant city in a car, when you come to a small town you have to slow down the speed of the car because of the traffic conditions in the town. In the heart of the city you have to go slower still, and you may even have to stop for some time and start again. When the road is clear, you can go faster to reach your destination.

In the same way, when resolutions come from the heart, situations may delay their fulfilment, but the speed can be increased again when better circumstances allow it. However, if it comes from the mind, and is checked, you will not remember it and it will be lost.

(9) R.A. His Holiness mentioned yesterday the spiritual influences which are available here. Is there anything we can do to make them available in equal strength in London?

S. Yes, of course, this is quite possible, but it can only be done in the natural way:

If we want to plant a tree and get fruit, we always start from the seed or sapling, and we look after it to allow it to grow – provide all necessary conditions without any disturbance, and in course of time it takes root, grows, and eventually you can enjoy the fruit, so everything is available later on.

It is just like an infectious disease which spreads because people come in contact.

So it is with spiritual influences – they also spread only after people come in contact with you. The best thing one can do is to have more contact where one lives, and slowly, when the influences which you have derived from here are passed on to other people, they keep on multiplying and adding. By this it would be possible for the place to become spiritually impregnated with such influences, and then everybody can make use of them.

It is much like a current and this story illustrates it: There was a trader who was very afraid of thieves getting into his shop to steal his cash at night. He therefore had his safe connected to the electric current to make it alive, and each night he would switch on, and disconnect it next morning.

One night four thieves got through the back door and one of them touched the safe and could not move. Another said, “Why are you not moving?” and went to pull him away, but he also became stuck to the first. The third tried to pull away the first two and also became stuck, and likewise the fourth – so all were stuck and all died because of the current. In the morning the trader came to open the shop and saw this, and informed the police and explained that, since he was afraid of thieves, he had connected his safe to the electric current.

This story is only to illustrate that good influences can also be given to people, but it has to be done in the systematic way by constant contact with the people. In India the good influences which are available are the product of thousands of years

of this devotional work which has kept going in India all this time.

For thousands of years in India this tradition of the spiritual life had taken root, and quite a number of people used to devote their full life to the search for the spiritual mystery in two ways. One way was to look into the spiritual life and attain spirituality through the medium of action. The other was to renounce the world; not through action, but through complete detachment one would work for Liberation. Now, whatever differences there were between these two groups, they need to support each other, and the whole fabric of society was interwoven with these two systems. So the young man would have to go through one of these two systems in his student life, and before he came out into the householder's life he would have received influences and training and knowledge so that he can live a good moral life in the world.

But, even in India, this oral influence of the spiritual realm is lost to a great extent. It is now available only in a few centres where the tradition is still alive. The common Indian man is now so intent on his search for material uplift in life that he is not interested at the moment in the spiritual way of life. After some time when he has achieved more material gain, he will find that the spiritual side is lacking and that the material gain does not bring real happiness. Then they will turn again, and only then will this Tradition, which is enshrined in some places, spread again.

This modern time is such that the material gain is the foremost thing in the mind of people everywhere; but again, in India, there are still certain people engaged in keeping this tradition alive and making these influences available only to those who want them. When the proper time comes, then these influences will increase in India. In the same way, if you collect influences from here and have more contact with people, then the influences can be spread at your place.

(10) F.R. At my lectures in New York people asked me why I had to go to India – so far away? I told them It was not geographical but accomplishment in Self-Realization. I knew what I wanted, and if I could have found it nearer home it would have been more convenient. I went on to mention His Holiness' example of the lame man and the blind man – would His Holiness have suggested something better?

S. The simile of the lame man and the blind man is quite all right. According to Indian tradition this story is related to the Natural Law and the man-made law. Man made law does not have far sight, and the natural Law does not have the capacity to command because it simply moves on naturally; whereas the man-made law commands, demands and makes people follow it, but does not have far sight of any sort. So, although the blind man can walk and work, he cannot see far ahead; whereas the natural Law, which has the far sight, does not have the legs, so it cannot move by itself.

In the worldly life the combination of these two is necessary, so that the movement towards the achievement of the Self-realization and of the Liberation is possible – only by the union of the lame and blind. It works because, by this union, the regulations become a little more gentle and the people can move with the gentler touch of the natural law, rather than be forced by man-made regulations to do certain things under force (against their conscience?). The achievements are bigger with the man-made laws, but they do not last long.

(11) M.A. One looks forward so much to coming here and as I said yesterday one feels one has been spiritually lazy, and the more pleasant the life has been the bigger the debt one feels. But I see from His Holiness' answer yesterday this is just an excuse. I would like to ask about the difference between laziness and passivity during meditation, because one feels the need for greater passivity to get the depth, but also one can find that one is lazy and just indulging in the pleasant dreams?

S. The situation described implies that if one finds oneself lazy on the way, then there is some sort of regret for being lazy or some sort of despondency of having done something wrong. This is the main cause of developing despondency and reverting back to the inferior influences. Even if the situations are in opposition and you are not able to carry on whatever you think you should have done, don't regret - just look ahead and see if they can be done now.

In the life of individuals they have to work according to a certain plan, and it is not necessary for the plan to be achieved in one day; and even in one day they have to take food, clean their body, arrange their rooms and do all sorts of other works and earn their livelihood. Doing all these things everyday, they carry out this plan day after day every morning. In the spiritual life also, if a good resolution has been taken, such as said by Mrs. Allan about the debt, this debt will be fully paid only if one kept on repaying it every day. If some day or other period of time was passed in lazy activities, one should not regret, but rather look happily ahead to doing it again.

Suppose some one had a good impulse about the last stage of his life when he has neither the energy nor the time to fulfil the resolution. Should one regret in such a situation? No, it is not necessary, for even if his body were to fall, he would certainly come back in more favourable situations to take up his resolution of the past life.

In the Bhagavad-Gita also it has been said that if a Yogi dies before full Realization, he is born in very favoured set-up to complete the work. This is very obvious for one sees every day that, in the search for Divine life or Liberation, there are both elderly and young achievers of spiritual truth. Sometimes young boys or girls also seem to be much interested and involved in this work. This is only because in their previous or present life a good impulse has set them working. Let the work proceed and progress

as it naturally does and, if any shortcoming is seen, just see it and forget it and don't regret it. Make the best use of the next moment which comes before you with full hope and possibility to support your resolution.

(12) D.C. Dr. David Connell has been asked to give lectures to young doctors about "understanding human behaviour", and asks what His Holiness would consider important in talking to them about this subject?

S. The study of human behaviour is best done by those who have studied the spiritual life. The spiritual life teaches one to look at oneself so those who have looked at themselves would be able to appreciate far more quickly the behaviour of other people.

When we are buying something we only look at a sample, and then we are satisfied that the material delivered to the house would be exactly the same as the sample.

So one does not have to study individuals for years and years. Twenty-four hours are enough to indicate the type of person he is and in twenty-four hours he will show different examples of Rajas, Tamas. He will show everything, and one can watch and find out where this individual is trying to proceed or as to what level he is, what his ambitions are, and what the future is for him. One can study individuals only if one studies oneself.

Take the example of a doctor who has learnt the art of medicine. A patient comes before him who may be suffering from many diseases simultaneously. An efficient doctor immediately finds out which is the main disease and which are the subsidiary ones which follow in its wake. He treats the main disease first, and then looks after the other ones.

In human behaviour there are certain main facets one has to look for. Having seen these, all these secondary things which come after can be studied. The study of human behaviour can only be done by those who study themselves.

[At the end of this meeting His Holiness said to interpreter Jaiswal that, from tomorrow's session onwards, we must put all our questions to a Sannyasin (approved teacher) whom he had invited to the Ashram, to answer our questions as he spoke English fluently.]

Thursday, 5 October

3rd audience:

(13) J.R. It seems to me that His Holiness is trying to get us to understand that, by dwelling on our short-comings and deficiencies, we are preventing the power of Param-Atman from reaching us.

S. Your observation is right – all activities which are initiated by an individual are aimed at some sort of gain, gain not in the bad sense, but personal advancement; and whenever one takes to any thinking about one's previous actions then one gets involved with that deed, and creates a sort of identity between something that happened previously with the person who ponders about it. Since a mistake has been made, you are tying yourself to the mistake. All mistakes are taking away precious energy which could equally be used for better actions. If you keep on thinking about your mistakes or shortcomings in the past, then you are wasting energy.

If you can get rid of that waste (activity), then it would be possible for you to engage your attention on the next moment, a process which promises to bring you extra energy by merging with the Absolute or Param-Atman, or any action related to the Param-Atman.

The Shankaracharya then directed us to put our questions to a Sannyasin (who had just entered) who spoke English and would answer direct.

An edited version of all the conversations with the Swami (eight sessions) is included as an Appendix (p.123) to this account, for

the following reasons:

(M.A.) Before going through the actual account, it came to me that the most important thing was what His Holiness said to Dr. Roles at the very beginning of the visit – “practically everything has been discussed before – but it is nice to come together again to refresh the memory” – so all the Swami’s answers could be a test for one to remember how His Holiness had previously answered, and what one had understood. I feel His Holiness’s subsequent corrections show that one cannot accept the Swami’s answers without very careful verification of His Holiness’s way of answering similar questions. I do not feel, therefore, that the Swami’s answers can form part of the main record of the wisdom from His Holiness.

The Swami’s answers about predestination, reincarnation, yoga, posture, bramacharya all conflict with previous answers of His Holiness’s. For instance, His Holiness gave a very simple and direct instruction re posture which was quite specific – that only the straight back was necessary and that it did not matter what we did with our legs, etc.

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Sunday, 8th October

R.A. Last Wednesday the Guru referred to the search for spirituality through the medium of action and the medium of renunciation. Could he say more about the medium of action?

S. As I said before, there are two different ways of approaching the liberation of mankind from human form. One is through activity towards Liberation, and the other is by renunciation – complete renunciation of the worldly life, and withdrawing oneself into such corners where one is not obliged to attend to any activity of the world. Of course he will take to the activities related to Liberation, but not related to the world. There are certain examples of this: Rama, Vashishtha, and Janaka.

[Note: Rama was the incarnation of God who was the hero of the great Hindu epic – the Ramayana. King Janaka you have heard of through the stories His Holiness tells about him. Vashishtha we know little about, but the following words of Sri Ramakrishna refer to him:

Ramakrishna: He who has knowledge has ignorance also. ‘How amazing!’ said Lakshman to Rama, ‘even a sage like Vashishta was stricken with grief because of the death of his sons!’ ‘My brother,’ replied Rama, ‘he who has knowledge has ignorance also. Therefore go beyond both knowledge and ignorance.’]

These three examples are exponents of this philosophy of liberation through activity. They were householders who were very famous men. One of the main facets of worldly anxiety is the fear and pressure attached to birth and death. By themselves they have

nothing to do with any sort of bondage – it's only when one takes them very seriously and treats them as real, then the bondage starts and the trouble appears. A man of activity would learn to discern what the Reality behind the appearance is and, although he would act in the appearance, he would always hold on to the Reality and thus avoid the conflict of pleasure and displeasure which seem to appear through birth and death.

For example, everyone knows that one is a human being, and this human being, neither in his awake states nor in his dream state, or sleep state or any other state would ever think that he was not a man – he would never think himself a beast of any sort. In the same way, if one knew precisely and decisively that one is the Atman or the Absolute, then there is no reason to by-pass any worldly activities. One can sail through them by virtue of reason, discernment\* and act as the situation demands and hold no Sanskar for it.

[\* 'dis' and 'cerno' = I sift = insight]

It is the birthright of human beings to walk on the earth but it is not necessary that they must also swim in the water. They can learn to swim, and if they have learnt to swim they can walk or swim, as the circumstances require. They will be able to do their job or cross the land or river whenever it is necessary. It is in exactly the same way that the human being can learn to swim through the world into the liberated land and act whenever the action is needed from him. This is the householder's way.

October 1972:

R. handed the following to interpreter Dixit for translation and submission to His Holiness:

“Mathematics and Physics in the West have become so complicated that they bear little relation to the practical life of the householder. But recently we have had one or two university professors in those subjects doing the Meditation with much benefit. It would be useful if we could prove to them that ancient wisdom (for example about the Laws of Three and Seven) could solve their problems more simply. You will, of course, know the following story with which we could perhaps begin, if our version is accurate:

There lived long ago, in the country of King Dharmasana, an old Brahmin who had three sons, and who possessed nothing in the world but 19 cows. Before he died he called his sons and said: “My sons, I am in the mouth of death, so listen attentively. All I have to give you are these 19 cows; divide them among you in this way: let the eldest take half of them; the next a quarter and the youngest a fifth share of them. But should there be any remainder left over, you must all three eat it; if not, all the cows are to be given to the King, and my curse will rest upon you.” And saying this, that old Brahmin died.

When, after performing the rites of burial, they came together to divide the property, the eldest brother said: “Half of these cows, that is nine cows and a half, are mine. The next brother said: “One quarter, that is four cows and three-fourths of a cow are mine”; and the youngest said: “the remaining fifth – that is three cows and four-fifths of a cow are mine.”

The eldest then remarked: “But the sum of all these, added together, amounts only to eighteen cows and a fraction of a cow. But how is it possible for Brahmins to eat the flesh of a cow; or how are we to take various pieces of a cow and leave it still alive? But unless we share in due measure, all the cows must go to the King, and our father’s curse will fall on us. Why did our father place us in so terrible a dilemma?”

After debating day and night, they at last put their problem to a Holy man. After a moment's thought he replied "Let the brothers borrow another cow. Then of the 20 cows let the eldest take half or 10 cows; the next a quarter or 5 cows; and the youngest a fifth or 4 cows. Then let them return the borrowed cow. Thus the 19 cows will be divided according to the father's instructions, with no remainder. Each brother will receive more than by their own division; and finally the King will be pleased. For He is a just King; and what would displease Him more than that, anywhere in His kingdom, Brahmins should kill and eat cows, let alone chop them up, and at the same time, disregard their father's dying instructions?"

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Note by R.: I used to think only that this story was a key to the Laws of Nature, for Nature always prefers whole numbers to fractions.\* But lately I perceive another meaning also – that whenever we put any problem, however complex, to the Param-Atman or to his representative, the fully Realized man, the answer comes back in so new and simple a form, that one gasps: "Why couldn't I have thought of that?"

(\* For instance, in the whole of quantum theory and Nils Bohr's model of the atom.)

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His Holiness's reply:

The mathematicians and the physicists should understand that in the Laws of Nature there are no "oddities" anywhere. There is, on the other hand, an "evenness" throughout. That is why they are so amenable to reason, and ultimately they all fit into one another so simply and beautifully. Ancient wisdom does help to solve problems easily. It is all contained in ancient "Granthas" (books).

But by simply reading them nobody can solve the problems as the “Granthas” contain “Granthis” (knots) which can only be undone by experienced Gurus.

For example, if arsenic is prescribed for the treatment of a particular disease, it takes a medical man to say in what form and in what dosage the arsenic is to be given.

These “Granthis” or knots are sometimes introduced purposefully:

A rich man built a temple. On the Vijay Dashma day and at 4 o'clock in the evening, he buried four pots-full of gold coins just where the shadow of the temple's pinnacle fell on the ground. He left a note in his Will for his sons stating that he had buried four pot-fulls of gold coins at 4 o'clock on the Vijay-Dashma day at the pinnacle of the temple. They may take it out if and when they run into financial difficulties.

Eventually the sons did run into financial difficulties. They broke the pinnacle and found nothing. Then they dug out the whole temple in search of the pots, still getting nothing. As they were in trouble for want of money, they talked to everyone about it. One day a Mahatma passed that way and he also heard their problem. After inspecting the site careful he asked them to rebuild the temple just as it was. This was easily done as all the material of the old temple was lying there. Then he asked them to call him again on the Vijay-Dashma day, and they did so.

He saw where the shadow of the temple's pinnacle fell at 4 o'clock on that day and asked the sons to dig there. The pots were found after digging down only a few feet.

Regarding the story of the Brahmin and his sons, it has a psychological meaning also.<sup>+</sup>\* The five organs of action, plus the five organs of sense, plus the five “Pranas”, together with Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankara make 19, and they constitute the body of the sons which the Brahmin had left. These were the 19 cows.

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<sup>+</sup> See quote from Mandookya-upanishad 1964 Record p.182

The 20th cow, which was borrowed and which facilitates the division, was Wisdom and did not form part of the body. Naturally it was left out as it only facilitated the division and it did not actually enter it.

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Further comment by R.:

This 'illuminating' answer confirms the idea of "Wisdom" as a catalyst, which makes a chemical reaction possible, but is not used up itself in the process – the borrowed cow! It also illustrates the method of the Calculus which uses 'infinitesimals' in the process of differentiation and then, by integration, removes them and reinserts the 'constant'.

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Friday, 13 October

Last audience:

[Present beside His Holiness were only his brother and another Realized man, both in the saffron robes and carrying the banners given to very special people.]

(14) R. (Jaiswal translating): First, we wish to thank you for the wonderful feast you spread before us yesterday with, I believe, 24 different dishes. We were even able to enjoy a few second helpings to make up for the absence of Mr. Allan!

Next, we offer to your Holiness our love and gratitude for your great patience and help once more on this visit. We assure you that we are not at all troubled by any apparent differences in the doctrine expressed. We have your previous answers to all the questions dealt with by Dandi Swami and can easily distinguish between the two voices. Much of what he said to us was very helpful and we shall continue to value it.

But now I ask your Holiness for what you wish to say, and to ask for your instructions.

S. In the Indian tradition the Vedas are the source of all types of knowledge that are available in India, and the Vedas contain support for all aspects of approach to the Absolute. In fact, according to one's own inclinations and preferences one can find support in the Vedas to establish the validity of the Absolute, and the purity of the ways and means adopted to reach the Absolute are

all available. Just as human beings have different tastes and preferences in food – some liking sweet, some savoury, some salty, some bitter, and they always look for and improve upon these tastes - by this they quench their thirst and hunger and enjoy it. None of these tastes is better or worse than others. It is a question of the inclination which creates and opens up a way of realizing the Absolute.

As has been told often before, there are primarily three Ways – the Way of Karma or action, the Way of Jnana or Knowledge, and the Way of Bhakti or Devotion. So there are people who can appreciate and devote their time and energy to the intellectual pursuit of the Absolute: it is this One aspect of the Absolute which they prefer and like to work with and become One with that aspect, and for which they are equipped so that it suits them. They cannot go any other Way. Similarly, there are people who cannot appreciate the intellect and they like to work on the emotions. Through the emotional pursuit they seek to become One with that aspect. If there are intellectual discussions, they usually shy off and prefer only those things related to emotional work. Also there are those who cannot go either through the intellect or by devotion and who prefer to do something practical. So there are three Ways to approach the Absolute, and none of them is better or worse than the others. So one has to see for oneself which one prefers, and if there are any difficulties in that context. These difficulties or doubts which arise out of the confusion of

different approaches should be cleared up. Whatever Dandi Swami has said, since he belongs to the Way of intellect, he has his own preferences. He has full support for the intellect in the Vedas, as it is entirely left to the individual to find out whether everything is clear and sort out difficulties.

(15) R. It is a great surprise to the Doctor to find someone more intellectual than himself! S. (laughs and says): The Vedas are supposed to be the most authoritative collection of the Scriptures. Everything has to be referred to the Vedas. Only if it is supported by the Vedas can a System be honoured in India. So everybody tries to look to the Vedas for threads of support. In the Vedas, and particularly the Upanishads, it says in one place that without Knowledge it is not possible for one to attain Liberation. All those people who are inclined to the intellectual way have always quoted this part of the Vedic text to show that nobody, whoever he may be, who has not learnt about the Absolute and learnt the Knowledge thoroughly, can liberate his soul from the duality of birth and death.

Similarly, there are quotations given by devotional people, taken from the Vedas, to show that, without devotion, no liberation is possible – and they say. “after all, knowledge is only a dry thing, and what use is knowledge to anyone! It is only through devotion one should approach the Absolute - forget all knowledge and forget all activity!”

But the adherents of activity can also quote certain things from the Vedas to show that, unless you put the teaching into practice by performing right actions, nothing will happen; for Self-realization arduous physical disciplines are required; so all your knowledge and devotion are of no use unless you express them in performing your day-to-day obligations.

(Note: H.H. had previously explained that the Bhagavad-Gita, which is the cream of all the Vedas, is based on these three; the first 6 chapters being devoted to the Yoga of Action (Karma), the next 6 to the Yoga of Devotion (Bhakti), and the last 6 to the Yoga of Knowledge (Science or Jnana).)

Common man, hearing quotations from all these three sources, usually gets perplexed for he is neither fully capable of all activity, nor of all knowledge, nor can he fully devote himself to the Absolute because he has to live his householder's life. There alone is the need for enquiry for anyone who, after hearing different views and being perplexed, should get everything clear for his own sake.

Here is an example:

Once in a village an elephant appeared and the news went around so everyone wanted to experience the elephant. Unfortunately most of the inhabitants were blind, and yet they had the desire to experience the elephant, so they were led to it. The mahout (or man in charge of the elephant), let them experience by touching the elephant, and of course they each touched a different part. Having experienced, they assembled together and wanted to verify that they had experienced

the real thing. The one who felt the foot said an elephant was a pillar. The one who had felt the tail said it was like a stick. And so it went on with the ears, trunk, tusks, fat tummy, etc. – each describing it according to the type of previous experience to which they could relate it. Then they started refuting each other: “Yours was not the proper elephant, yours was illusion, mine is the only real one, etc.” Later on the mahout told them, “You cannot have the vision of the complete elephant. All you can do is put together all these experiences of different people of ‘elephant’, and out of these experiences a novel creature should be imagined which is known as ‘elephant’ – but it is the sum of all these parts and something more – which represents the wholeness (unity) of the creature known as elephant.”

In the same way, because of the different quotations from the Scriptures, it is possible and usual for some sort of conflict or doubt to arise in the minds of people. They must make an effort to get it clarified because there are people like this mahout, in our spiritual life, who are available to dispel their doubts.

(16) R. Can we speak of one or two more subjects close to our hearts?

To us four and many of our friends there is no longer any difference in our Soul (Antahkarana) between Param-Atman, the present Shankaracharya, and the great men of his Tradition or our Christian tradition. They are all one and the same. If we call constantly on Param-Atman for help in any problem, something of all that you have said comes to our help. For instance, (your recent answer to Mr. Rabeneck): “A feeling of sameness possesses our heart with eyes open or shut. The mind sheds its burdens and becomes filled with joy instead.”

S. Your observation is very good, and since it happens like that, it is commendable. The Tradition of the Shankaracharya was started from Narayana as you know; that means the Absolute Himself, and then was followed by others like Vyasa, Shukadeva, Gandapādachārya and then the original Shankara, and after him hundreds of Shankaracharyas right down to the one you are facing. It is quite possible that even the Shankaracharyas, according to their own being, may have had certain preferences and would have invoked these Vedic Scriptures to support their particular way, but in fact they all lead to the same ultimate end. There is no difference of ideology underlying them in support of man's search for Liberation. There may be little preferences which can be different. There was a man called Madhusudan Saraswati. He was a Shankarite – he belonged to the Shankaracharya System and was one of the greatest intellectual giants of the later middle ages of India, but he had preference for devotion, so all his books (he wrote a number of books) have underlying support for devotion in preference to the Way of Knowledge. Although he, himself, was a man of knowledge, he supported the devotional Way.

In the same way, all that has been propounded here, through His Holiness, is in fact not his, but belongs to the Tradition, so all this traditional work and the Knowledge which goes through Dr. Roles or Mr. Allan or others in their own way is related to the same Tradition. It is not the individuals who speak, but the tradition speaks through these individuals.

(17) R. Lately, in a letter, His Holiness reminded us that the world, either as we see it in dreams, or in waking state, has three stages – creation, maintenance and destruction. In my understanding it is this middle one which we don't know the real meaning of, or what it is about. Somehow, in my heart, the idea of Lord Vishnu is connected with this. If I read anything about Vishnu or his incarnations, it refreshes and cheers me. Such as the story of Ajāmila in the Bhagavatam.

S. These three steps or situations which you describe – creation, maintenance and destruction – these are the aspects of the three Gunas – (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). Vishnu belongs to the state of Sattva, Brahma to the Rajas, and Rudra or Shiva to the Tamas. In Rajas there is no fixed position or state. Rajas is not stable – it is not a materialisation of anything – it is activity (Sanskrit – ) when things are about to take shape. The state comes either in the Sattvic region or in the Tamasic region. It is only because of this that Brahma in India has never been worshipped and is never favoured for any worship anywhere in India. Only in the Yagya (when a sacrifice has to be performed). Since Brahma is the Creator – he is the first ancestor, he is the great-great-grandfather of all human beings, so at most he is offered a seat of honour at the sacrifice and given oblations so as to appease him! Otherwise he is never given any preference or devotion. Whenever you take to activity, there are only two positions. Either you will get tired or exhausted

and go to sleep (or Tamas), rest there and come out later on; or after putting yourself into active form and having achieved the end of the activity and everything materialises in success then, in return, you get the bliss or enjoyment of having done the job well and successfully. This enjoyment immediately gives light, makes you light, and you feel very fresh even after strenuous work.

Now yesterday at your feast here, all the people who were engaged in preparation of the food, were very eager to see how their labour fared. When they saw the smiling faces of those for whom the food was made, and they saw the appreciation of the food, they were delighted – a lot more than any of you who enjoyed the food. In return this created far more bliss, and all their exertion was finished and they enjoyed the occasion far more than you could have done. This is how it works, so Vishnu is related to this sustaining of this Universe, and he sustains only by giving something – just as the food was prepared for you like a sacrifice in honour of the guests – and with love Vishnu maintains\* the whole creation. Vishnu is one of the deities most honoured in Indian tradition because of the protection and sustenance which he offers through love.

(\*Note: Jaiswal said ‘maintains’, but does he mean sustains?)

(18) R. I particularly like the story of Ajāmila, because here is a man who started well but led a sinful life, and when faced with death he was very frightened, but he pronounced the name of Narayana

(the name of his favourite son) so the attendants of Vishnu came and sent away the attendants of death; and I (myself) had a similar experience!

S. In Indian history, as put in the Bhagavatam, the rôle of the Holy men – the Mahatmas – is very important. Mahatmas have a life of their own, but they appear in common life as well, and when they appear in common life they always come with advice – some sort of tactful advice – so that without disturbing the life of the common man or his frame of mind, they put in something which is of direct use to the individual, even though he does not realize the importance of the advice given to him.

The story of Ajāmila is an example of this tactful practical advice:

He was an ordinary man engaged in his worldly life and not of any saintly disposition. Once a Mahatma happened to come by his town and to eat at his house and wanted, in return, to give him some tactful advice. So the Mahatma asked him, ‘What is it that attracts you most? Is there anything to which you are, above all, attached?’

Ajāmila said: “I am most attached to my youngest son.” So the Mahatma asked him to call the youngest son by the name of Narayana. Whenever, therefore, he had to call this boy, he should call him by that name, and so he did.

There wasn’t anything more that Ajāmila was asked to do – he wasn’t prescribed any discipline or satsang or other things except this advice. So at the time of his death as usual, without knowing, he called Narayana his little son, and because of this name – the messengers of Narayana (Vishnu) appeared and liberated him.

In the course of devotional work which people do – for

instance, in India there are temples with carved stone statues of Gods in them before which people worship, bow down and pray. In fact, it is not the stone sculpture which is being worshipped; it is the idea of the God which has been superimposed on this stone statue, and it is because of the devotion to the particular idea of God that they get attuned to that God. But as far as the names are concerned – the Mantras – they are very potent even though there is no form attached to the Mantra. In fact, the name Narayana stood for a Mantra which, without being initiated, he used to recite in calling his son. Just as in meditation we are given certain words, the word has no form other than the vocal sound – it is not attached to any particular deity or any particular meaning, it is only a sound, but it is a creative sound.

All sounds are creative, so when a Mantra is given, this creative sound becomes the vehicle of transformation in the individual. Thus, because Ajāmila used to pronounce the name Narayana, which is very like a Mantra, the forces involved in the sound were made use of for his self-development. Just as with a fire – if you touch it, whether knowingly or unknowingly – then it is bound to burn you, to hurt you. In exactly the same way, a Mantra like Ram and Narayana whether you know anything about it or not – if you utter it, it will come to the rescue and do the job of liberation or whatever it can.

(19) R. We wish His Holiness success in his visit to the Himalayas (of which we read in today's newspaper), and we want to thank him

very much for all his patience with us this time, and may we continue to write – not expecting answers!

S. nods and offers his blessings for the development of all those souls scattered all over the world under your leadership. May they prosper.

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One of the stories told by Dandi Swami is so valuable that we are giving it here:

R.A. (to D.S.): You told us that the past and future is already printed on the cinema reel. Are the meetings that I have had with His Holiness and now with you, and whatever may follow from these meetings, also already recorded on the reel of my life, or is it possible that such an occurrence as these meetings may change my part in the drama?

D.S. However much I may tell you that everything is predestined, or already recorded on the reel, you won't admit it because ego is there. Therefore, in spite of realizing that everything is predestined, everything is being directed by God Himself, your ego won't admit it, and will go on as if it is the doer. A story illustrates it:

On the mast of a ship a bird was sitting quietly while the ship left the port and was going out to sea. The bird was confident that it could fly the distance back and reach its own place. After a long time with the ship far out to sea, it was evening, and the bird was thinking that its children would be crying for it at home, and so it made an attempt to fly home across the ocean. But it could not find the shore, so thought it must have mistaken the direction and returned to the mast for a rest. When it was rested it set off again in another direction, but the same thing happened – it could not find the shore because the distance was too great. It was not within the power of the bird to reach the shore. It went to the South, to the North, to the East and West, but in the end it realized there was nothing it could do, so it returned to the mast and once more sat quietly.

Now it was confident again, but in another way – not that “I can do”, but “I must go where the mast of the ship is taking me.”

So long as you are in the individual ego and not on the cosmic plane, you will be thinking that you can do it yourself.

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Of the many other stories he told, the following have proved helpful:

D.S. Now, when I am speaking, it is only what His Holiness intends me to say. His Holiness transmits – I speak. Yesterday you said that I was speaking too fast, but the ideas which His Holiness was transmitting were so full that I was trying to transmit all of them to you.

I give the example of Vivekananda who went to New York and was told that he would only have five minutes to address an audience. He stood up intending to speak himself, and found he was dumb; but he remembered his Guru, Ramakrishna, who was dead, and suddenly the words flowed in such a way that the audience was fascinated and he was allowed to go on much longer than five minutes.

Although his Guru was dead, Cosmic mind could make this connection. Distance and place are not a bar, nor time.

So, if you had put your questions direct to His Holiness, he might have used different words, and answered in a very short way, but the essence would be the same. So don't think, "I have spent all this money, and come all this way to hear His Holiness, and this old fellow is doing the talking!"

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R. to D.S.: His Holiness had given instruction to “pray to Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind,” and I tried every way for some time. But ‘mind’ never could do it. Then recently I found that something was praying. Who is it that prays?

D.S. There are two things called ‘I’ – the Great Self which is pure Consciousness, and the little self that identifies with the physical body and the senses. One wears temporary clothes, the other is pure, naked. The clothed one is praying to the naked one that he also may be naked. In the story of the lion cub, the lion had not become a sheep, he only thought he was a sheep. There was no physical change – only a different mental attitude.

Prayer is needed only so long as you don’t see yourself in the ocean of Consciousness; but in both those states the Param-Atman remains unchanged.

S. (intervening): The limited one is praying to the infinite. You cannot have complete happiness when you are limited because there is still something left to desire. As long as the finite is not merged with the infinite, there will be desire, and so effort and prayer will be there.

A person once came and asked me: “If God is omnipresent and omniscient, then whose ignorance is it?” The answer was: “You are in truth omnipresent and omniscient, and ignorance is only forgetfulness.” So, the ignorance belongs to the person who is asking that question.

R. I am beginning to understand also that the film is already made – you cannot go to the cinema and ask them to change the reel.

D.S. But you can change the attitude of your mind.

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F.R. People all over the world who practice the meditation are asking how they can come in closer contact with the fully Realized man and his whole Tradition? Can they come in contact with his mind on the subtle level?, and how can they come in contact with the Being of the fully Realized man?

D.S. Certainly it is possible both in a physical and a subtle way. For this, regard and prayer are necessary.

He gave the example of the low-caste man who went to Dronacharya who was the great teacher of the bow and arrow, and longed to learn his art from him, but was refused because of his low caste. But out of his regard for this teacher he made a clay figure of the teacher, and continually looked towards him and prayed to him. He did this in the forest, and then practised himself the art of the bow and arrow. Later he became a greater warrior than the teacher.

Now you may ask, Who is the Guru? The Guru was himSelf. If you go before a selection board choosing, say, officers, you will suppose that the selectors are superior in knowledge and experience to yourself? Now, did you select the Shankaracharya to be your teacher? So, who is the selector, and who is the selected? Who is the superior – the “selector” will create guru out of you. Geography does not matter. It is intensity of desire for the Guru which is necessary.

Gave example from Ramakrishna to show the need for intense desire.\*\*

With this intense desire for a teacher, if it is necessary, this will bring a physical body to you; if it is not necessary, it will bring the real Knowledge to you.

F.R. said you needed to practise this.

D.S. Yes, it was like milk – you could see or smell milk and you would not be nourished by it; even if you drank it, you would not be nourished unless you could digest it.

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\*\* Note: The version given on the following page is that told by His Holiness during our 1970 visit to Allahabad in the context of “Melting of the heart”.

S. ... Everyone is capable of having their hearts melted, but because of certain situations the hardening has taken place.

### Ramakrishna and Narendra

Vivekananda (whose earlier name was Narendra) went to paramhans Ramakrishna, who was the leading Swami in those days. Narendra's heart was so hard that he did not even pay his respects to the saint, and very arrogantly put to Ramakrishna the question: "Have you seen the God?", to which Ramakrishna replied: "Yes, I have seen him." Narendra then asked: "How did you see him?" He replied: "As I see you." Narendra said "Can you show me the God?" Ramakrishna said, "Yes, I will show you in due course."

After that he stayed with Ramakrishna. One day they went to have a bathe in the river. The saint asked Narendra to come close to him and told him to dive under the water. The moment he dived, Ramakrishna pounced on him and forcefully kept Narendra under the water. Now this lean and thin boy (as he was in those days) was struggling hard to get out of the water to save his breath and life. The more he struggled the more the saint forcibly kept Narendra under water, until with all his might he threw his Master off his shoulders and came out of the water. When in a very angry mood he accused Ramakrishna of trying to drown him, the saint smiled and replied: "Well, Narendra, if you could develop the same strength of desire to see the God as you had to come out of the water, certainly you would be able to see the God!"

Thus, all the mercy, care, and love of his Master, melted the heart of the young rebel. Later on he became one of the best exponents of the Vedanta philosophy both in India and in the West.

S. concluded:

So it is quite possible to melt the hearts of all those people who, because of circumstances, have hearts which have become hard. They simply need care and love, and reasonable discourse with which they should be helped to melt their heart .....

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4. Correspondence.

On 12th November 1972 we had a long letter containing comments about a report of some of our meetings in London (See Readings 3 and 8, 1972).

Interpreter Dixit writes:

When I presented a translation of your Reading 3 to His Holiness, he asked me to sit down and read it out to him. As I did so, he found it necessary to throw some further light on the Swami Ji's answers so that they may be better understood by your audiences and chances of any misunderstanding removed as far as possible.

1) His Holiness very much liked the remark by Mr. St. John White (artist and teacher of art) about the paying of debts:

“Is this paying to do with returning something which is given you? This sense of ‘returning’ can be developed especially in creative arts. The compulsion to work is tied in with an unusual feeling of having to give back. In life one is in a situation where you have to give. I have 100 students which I find difficult, but if one avoided it, that would be some kind of rejection – instead of an opportunity.”

He also appreciated Dr. Fenwick's remark that, ‘When things go wrong inside the School here, and sometimes outside, it is frequently a question of who is doing it.’

He observed that our past accumulated nature and the six inner enemies, i.e. Kama (obsessive desires), Krodha (anger), Lobh (greed), Madh (vanity), etc. make things go wrong. Blame should not be thrown on God thinking He motivated everything that happened. As explained in the Gita, Kama creates a lot of Rajoguna which, in turn, does much mischief.”

[The references to some of Dandi Swami's answers mostly refer to the talk on Saturday, 7th October; see appendix (pp.132–138).]

Since our talks with the Swami had been entirely in English, we did not know how much of them he had appreciated in detail. These further comments are therefore of great interest.

2) (p.134) “Worship of God should not be in a closed room only....” It should be clearly understood that this does not in any way condemn worship in a closed room. On the contrary, it is necessary. Only, it should be supplemented in all actions as indicated by the Swami Ji, and not forgotten after coming out of the room.

3) (p.134) The simile of the puppet should not be taken too literally, because, if we were really so, then Self-realization would have become an impossibility. We have got an Atman, the very substance of Param-Atman, which the puppet has not got.

4) (p.134) “You can offer your actions and thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent.”

His Holiness is emphatic that only good actions should be offered to God. As regards bad actions, we must always regret them and pray to Him to be forgiven for them. Param-Atman is not the fount of any bad actions. His actions are good and orderly, and this is why an order prevails in the universe. If He could ever initiate a wrong action, the cosmos would immediately lapse into chaos.

Wrong actions originate as explained under (1) above. We must, however, bear in mind that the very same action can be good in one situation and bad in another.

5) (p.135) “The fire does not refuse to burn dirty linen,”

True, but the question hardly arises as soiled clothes are just sent to the laundry. We do not take the trouble of consigning them to fire!

6) (p.138) “The sweeper can fill his basket and offer it to God ... as a basket of flowers.”

In actual practice, it is most difficult not to discriminate between a basket of rubbish and flowers as an offering to God. Everything about God is clean and beautiful. Therefore, offering Him anything unclean and ugly would appear contrary to the spirit of worship. That is why it is traditional to offer flowers.

7) (p.138) “The soldier’s rôle is to kill ....”

But a hunter cannot treat killing as his rôle. We have to be most cautious in seeking exceptions to the general rule that non-violence is the greatest virtue. It is true that Krishna advised Arjuna to fight. But it was done when an enemy was standing in front ready to launch an attack, rejecting all attempts for a peaceful settlement.

8) ‘Trying to change the film shown on the cosmic screen.’

We need not do this at all, as the cosmic screen is constantly showing a multitude of various films, and we can always select a film which we can like. Just as a large number of cinema houses in the town screen various films, we only go to that one which shows the film of our own choice – instead of trying to change the film on show at a particular house.

His Holiness liked your concluding remarks.

4th December – from Mr. Dixit

After explaining that the delay in answering R.'s letters was due to his Holiness's frequent absence from the Ashram, he continued:

“When I saw him last with your previous letter, he did not give me any hint as to whether he was in favour of your trying to continue the correspondence with the Dandi Swami. Perhaps, you could try either of them.

I have read with deep interest the script of the discourse which took place at Colet House on 21st November (Meditation meeting). And reading such matters, being equivalent to good company, is bound to exercise a beneficial influence on the mind of anyone who can give a thought.”

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18th December:

After acknowledging photographs for Raghunath Singh and reporting on his Holiness's movements, D. continued:

“By the way, during your discourses here with the Dandi Swami, I had seen him strongly objecting to your using the expression “stilling the mind”. He said, “Stilling is a very obnoxious word.” He suggested “sublimation” instead.

While I agreed with Swami Ji in principle, I felt that “stilling”, whatever it might mean, was also beneficial to most people. On the other hand, many may find “sublimation” more difficult without the help of a psychologist.”

1973

29th January:

His Holiness's replies to R.'s letters of 31st December, 1972 and 10th January, 1973:

31st December

His Holiness sends you many thanks for your New Year Greetings and for your good wishes for his health and prosperity in his spiritual and religious work to the fullest extent.

10th January

In my view you are like Vibhishana who first gave his thought to Rama and then, as a result, he was blessed with a meeting with Hanuman. Then Vibhishana tried to show reason to Ravana, the embodiment of Ahankara, but was insulted. Then he came under the protection of Rama. Through Rama's grace Vibhishana acquired the spiritual as well as the worldly kingdoms. Atman, the embodiment of Rama, killed Ravana. Thereafter Vibhishana, the man, ruled over a worldly kingdom as well, as he kept Param-Atman in his mind as ordered by Rama. So his worldly as well as non-worldly missions were both successful.

I take you to be Vibhishana, and not Ravana.

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28th January: Mela:

The word “RAM” possesses special attractions and attributes. The trilling sound of “RA” directs the mind to the vibrations of such vibrant forms of energy as that which lives in the sun, the heavenly bodies and the fire, etc., with which the drama of the universe began to take shape from nothing.

Then the sound “M”, with its humming note, calms down everything into something which words fail to express.

This is, however, only to say a little about its significance and subtle effects; though a close observation of things around us would reveal a whole series of its secrets one after another.

To take only one crude example: watch the sound of the huge furnaces of the Bhilai Steel Plant, which pour out torrents of molten iron. You constantly hear “Rrrrr-m! Rrrrr-m! Rrrrr-m! ... ..” So, this sound emits when a hard substance like iron melts, purifies, goes into still better steel.

This would look like a far-fetched example to illustrate the point, and so would each and every example quoted individually.

But considering the cumulative evidence as a whole, we are led to a more convincing conclusion:

It is thus that Hanuman, by remembering the sacred Name, was able to bring under his will the Great Param-Atman.

Valniki, using it with letters even reversed by mistake, became himself like Param-Atman.

Panini, an author of immortal fame, says that as soon as a word is uttered, it creates the thought of the object it represents.

Thus “RAM” lives in everything, in every heart, and takes every shape. It is, however, One and only One.

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29th January: Mela:

‘As compared with the huge size of the universe we live in, this human body of ours is like a speck of dust. Compared with the unlimited Consciousness of the Param-Atman, our Mind (Buddhi), is like a drop in the ocean. And the problem before us is how to tackle that great Consciousness with such limited means – a hopeless business apparently! But hope comes from the saying, ‘God helps those that help themselves,’ which is fortunately true.

The real cause of failures is not the inadequacy of means but an inadequacy of understanding and of determination. Provided we understand what is required, and provided our determination is strong enough, a very little can achieve great results, because on seeing the invincibility of our determination, the heart of Param-Atman melts and He Himself comes to our help.’

This is illustrated by the story of the two birds whose eggs were washed away by the sea. They made up their minds to fill up the sea. They picked up drops of seawater in their tiny beaks and dropped them on the beach, and from there they picked up some sand and dropped it in the sea. This went on for some time. Seeing them doing this, other birds also joined them till it became a curious sight to see.

Rishi Agastya happened to pass that way, and on seeing such fun going on he enquired what it was all about. The birds told him their story.

“Do you really think,” asked the Rishi, “that you could complete this work even by labouring all your life night and day?”

“No. But we are determined to devote not only this life but a thousand lives, or even more, to this work till it is completed. We are sure that we are not going to put up with the injustice that the sea has inflicted on our innocent off-spring.”

The Rishi was moved by the just cause of the birds and their strong determination to recover their eggs from the sea. He used his Yogic powers to restore the birds' eggs to them.

This is a standard story, always quoted to illustrate how strong your determination should be if you are small and your task great.

‘All doctrines and Scriptures say that Param-Atman can be reached by going through some established system of discipline. But we see people who have tried them all and yet achieved nothing. The reason is that, for union with the Pure Consciousness of Param-Atman we cannot lay down any laws as Newton did for the physical universe, and then feel sure that everything will go accordingly. The union with Param-Atman is achieved solely by His grace, when His heart melts on seeing the rock-like determination of the devotee.’

An Aryan Samajist (a sect which, among other things, condemns idolatry) and an idol worshipping devotee used to live side by side. Day in and day out the former pestered the latter to give up idol worship and to start praying to the all pervading and omnipotent God. Eventually this pestering became unbearable to the devotee and he made a sincere prayer to his deity, Krishna, to deliver him from his troublesome neighbour.

Then Krishna showed himself to the Aryan Samajist in a dream, but he denounced him in the dream and told him that he recognised no Krishna at all. When he woke up he saw a vision of Krishna before his eyes. He turned his head away from it, but in whichever direction he looked he saw the same vision. This sent him out of his wits. Telling all this to the devotee, he apologised to him for his previous conduct.

The devotee wept before the deity and complained that the Master did not show Himself to him despite all his years of devotion, and instead appeared before the other man who denounced him. Then Krishna also appeared in his dream and consoled him that what he did was at his own request.

There are seven successive stages like the steps of a ladder each leading to the next, till the final stage is reached. They are:

- 1) The first stage is good actions, which lead to –
- 2) the second stage, which is good thoughts.
- 3) Good thoughts lead to the third stage, which is decrease in bad thoughts.
- 4) Decrease in bad thoughts leads to the fourth stage, which is Satoguna.
- 5) Satoguna leads to the fifth stage which is decrease in worldly attractions.
- 6) Decrease in worldly attractions leads to the sixth stage, which is giving up of worldly objectives (incentives). (See p.xvii)
- 7) Giving up of worldly objectives leads to the seventh and the final stage, which is freedom from all thoughts about one's own self, (one's personal profit) and its consequent benefits.

I once saw a Mahatma at Amarkantak, who wore no clothes at all. I asked him why he was breaking the universally accepted social custom of covering the body, and what was wrong with it. However, I saw that when he felt thirsty he did not ask for water by word of the mouth but only looked thirsty. Someone gave him a glass of water. Although he drank it, he did not even hold the glass in his hand. This showed how he resorted to no physical action to satisfy his bodily needs. This was his own way of leading a free life. Of course, he could have done it a little differently.

Questions of procedure should be answered in the language procedure. Questions relating to prayer should be answered in the language of prayer. Those relating to Vedanta should be answered in the language of Vedanta. Otherwise they would amount to offering a thing which is not needed actually. It would be something like offering food to one who is not hungry, or water to one who is not thirsty.

As regards the method of approach through prayer, procedural errors can be forgiven in it. But this is not an ideal, not even a rule.

Observance of the various disciplines does not get us up to the Param-Atman. It only purifies the Chitta, and then Param-Atman Himself comes into it; and the observance of disciplines is necessary only till the melting and purification of Chitta is complete.

These ideas do not arise in thinkers. Thinkers actually want nothing, not even God. (p.116) They only want a purification of the Antahkarana.

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Finally I may mention that though Prarabdha (see letter 8th May, p.31) can be helpful or unhelpful in our worldly efforts, yet it would not stand in the way of our spiritual progress. For example: recitation of a Mantra would be useful even if the back is not straight. If circumstances do not let us sit down to worship in the prescribed manner, we can do it even mentally in any way the circumstances permit. But what is wrong is to postpone it, as postponing a debt does not save us from repaying it, but only increases the burden of interest we have to pay.

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29th January: Mela:

The previous speaker explained the story of Sita, the wife of Rama, as unfolded for us in the Epic Ramayana. Just as King Rama represents the fundamental Param-Atman, similarly Sita, his Queen, represents fundamental energy. Energy is the capacity of a body to perform work. A body-less Param-Atman can therefore perform no work and it has to adopt energy for this purpose. But if energy is adopted, there has to be some identity to adopt it – otherwise there can be no adoption. If there is to be any energy, there has also to be a vehicle to convey it; just as if there are waves there must also be a medium to conduct them.

The two identities, of the fundamental Param-Atman and the fundamental energy, though going by separate names and allotted different attributes as a matter of convenience, are intrinsically inseparable from each other. Thus Rama and Sita, though different, are yet the same. And all that is attributed to Rama in the story of Rama and Sita is done by Sita, because without energy work cannot be done.

Actually, it is only the display of energy that can introduce us to the possessor of energy – the Param-Atman. Thus, energy attracts us towards the presence of Param-Atman. This is what goes in the Upanishads by the name of Brahmavidya,\* the Divine Knowledge.

People possessing knowledge sometimes become too much obsessed with it and begin to feel a pride of superiority, even condemning Bhakti (devotional way). This is misuse of knowledge. Pride, too,

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\* Brahmavidya: Science of Brahman; knowledge of Brahman; learning pertaining to Brahman or the Absolute Reality. (YVD)

has a place in our lives and we may all possess it, but of course using it only to prevent ourselves from stooping low into undignified tendencies. So also has the Individual ego (Ahankara)\* a place in our lives and its use is that of an incentive to duty. For example, the Ahankara of being a policeman should impel a policeman to perform his duties with all the dignity of his rank!

It is the 'Department of the Interior' (Autonomic) which sends us towards the path of Bhakti. Bhakti has more use for ideology than for any intellectual reasoning. For one on the path of Bhakti, even if the judgement goes wrong at times over details, then frequently it does not matter .....

We make much of our human intellect, the Buddhi. But we forget that it is designed to work within the worldly limits only. Param-Atman is beyond the worldly limits and hence out of the reach of Buddhi. Here a devoted heart reaches the goal. Buddhi can, at the utmost, carry us up to the door and then leave us there to take care of ourselves, having no further approach. As it cannot go further, all it can do then is to keep us away from Param-Atman!

In the context of Bhakti, the example of Kunti (the bereaved mother in the Mahabharata Epic) furnishes an interesting argument. It is unique in the sense that no one except her has ever asked specifically to be given adversities, whereas every one else throughout history has asked for deliverance from adversities:

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\* Note: The Indian word Ahankara can best be thought of as the whole individuality of a given person – a blend between the 'essence' (inborn), his 'personality' (acquired), and his 'Soul', that inner nature which remains much the same always.

When Krishna was leaving after the war, all others asked for this or that favour. When the turn of Kunti came, she said, "Give me some adversity or other to remain with me all the time."

"But why adversity?"

"Because in the past I always thought of You and brought You near me whenever there was adversity, and never when there was none."

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3rd February: Mela:

Wisdom lives in the heart of all of us, but instead of flowing as a constant stream, it flows and ebbs intermittently. This is why we act sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly; sometimes we are virtuous, sometimes sinful. Every year you assemble here for the Mela, and no doubt you benefit from the contact and preachings of the Holy men you find here. But this effect does not last, and by the time of the next Mela many of you lose what you gain and become as you were before. Then you attend another Mela, gain something, only to lose it again. So this alternate gain and loss goes on indefinitely, each neutralising the other and your remaining days of life becoming fewer and fewer. Even during your ordinary life wisdom shines and fades intermittently; we are very holy at times, and very unholy at times; sometime we dream of having become a king, sometimes of being reduced to beggary. The reason for all this is that we have pushed the Param-Atman into the background and kept Ahankara in the foreground.

The word 'Ahankara' is frequently treated as a synonym for pride in ordinary language, and we consider it as an undesirable quality. If you have any Ahankara at all, better raise it sky-high'; otherwise let it go down, down, down.

A Mahatma used to say, "There is no Mahatma like me". People said, "It is the limit of Ahankara to say so. How does it behove you, who are a Mahatma?" He replied, "Everyone else is either better than me, or worse. But none is exactly the same as I; so I am right."

This has a deeper meaning. Indeed, every one of us is unique,

having no equal anywhere in the world. Still, it has become fashionable nowadays to talk of equality. But can you find equality anywhere in the vast field of creation? The world exhibits nothing but variety, and variety means nothing but the existence of differences. If these differences, the differences between one thing and another disappear, then the whole world would disappear, as it does in a state of dreamless sleep.

Our ignorance of the Truth is the fortress of evil. Let us “burn” it with the fire of wisdom. The ignorance having been thus burnt, the false beliefs living in it will also burn off. Then there would be nothing left to hide the Param-Atman.

Instead of doing this, people invariably go and ask a Mahatma or a Guru: “Sir, be gracious enough to show me the Param-Atman. I am very anxious for that.” But the poor Guru has to do a tremendous amount of spade-work before he can do that, for which people have no patience.

For example: The Prince of Tehri once met Swami Ram Tirtha and asked him, “Swami Ji, can you show God to me?”

“Yes, But before I do that, can you tell me exactly what you are? Are you the body I see, or something else?”

“Oh!” I don’t know.”

“Well, when you are so ignorant that you do not know even who you are, who can show you the Great God!”

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3rd February: Ashram Talk:

Two kinds of forces live in all of us – good and evil. Their co-existence leads to conflict, and conflict leads to unhappiness. Had there been no such conflict, there would have been a perpetual state of happiness. Forces of evil like desire, anger, etc., exist in saints also, but the difference is that they do good to others instead of harming them. Liberation implies freeing the Chitta from this duality of good and evil.

The universe also unfolds itself in two ways: one way is the way of “Avidya”, ignorance, in which we imagine ourselves to be the “doers” of actions, and are, therefore, subject to the Law of “Karma”, i.e. ‘as you sow, so you reap’. The other way is like the performance of a drama, in which the actor, acting as a thief or a saint, knows he is not a thief or a saint. For him, therefore, the Law of “Karma” does not hold.

For example: in cases where Param-Atman took the part of a man according to Hindu Scriptures, he was not really a man. Thus, he was not bound by the “Karmas” he did as such.

This cannot be the case with a person who identifies himself with his actions. If anyone thinks that he has won a victory today, the Law of Karma lays down that he would suffer a defeat tomorrow.

It is said that when evils are absent, we meet Param-Atman. This may not always be true.

For example: A tree has no evils, and yet we cannot say that it has met Param-Atman. A pitcher with its mouth turned downwards, will never get filled with water even if it rains heavily.

Similarly, Param-Atman is pouring His favours on us constantly, but we do not benefit from it as we are turned away from Him. Param-Atman tries to help us all the time, but it is our self-help that is lacking.

It takes nine months for a human embryo to develop into a baby, but it takes only an instant to die. Similarly, the cumulative effect of years of practice can be nullified in minutes (seconds).

An old woman lived in a village. It was winter, and a cat died in her house. She thought that if she threw it away in daytime, she would have to take a bath afterwards as otherwise her neighbours would regard her as unclean. So she waited till night. When everybody was fast asleep, she quietly went to the river a little distance away and threw it into the water.

By the time she got back home, a sick camel had strayed into her courtyard and died there. Now the carcass needed several strong men to drag it out. Therefore the whole villa came to know of it and the old woman could not avoid a bath.

Something similar applies to renunciation and involvement.

A bondage is a bondage after all; it does not matter whether it is a golden chain that binds you, or a chain of iron. Of course, the golden chain is attractive; but a prisoner is a prisoner, whether he is awarded an “A” class, or a “B” class, or a “C” class in the prison. Worldly pleasures are like “A” class accommodation in a prison, and troubles like “C” class.

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4th February: Ashram talk:

What is (the) world? What is truth? What are you? Well, we want to find out all that. You are “Sat-Chit-Ananda”, i.e., eternal reality, full of power and joy, etc. But how? Just think whether you have any personal knowledge as to how and when you were born. You only know the date and time of your birth as you have heard from others. You never actually experienced your birth. Then take it that you were never born; and a thing which is not born cannot die either. Thus, you are unborn and deathless, and so are “Sat-Chit-Ananda”.

Ravana is a Sanskrit name. It means, ‘one who makes you sleep’ is Ravana. It is said that he had ten heads. Then, how could he go to sleep with ten heads? Just as we do. The ten heads were imaginary or metaphorical. You are also a ‘Ravana’. Your ‘ten heads’ are the ten organs of action and sense. Ravana’s fortress is said to have been made of gold, Lanka. The Sanskrit word for gold has two meanings, i.e., the noun “gold” and the verb “to sleep”. Gold attracts, and so did Lanka; Lanka was devoid of true Knowledge, so it was ‘sleeping’.

“Satsanga” is good company. We get it through the company of holy books, through the company of Holy men, and through the company of Param-Atman. In order that we do not get confused and lost in a labyrinth of ideas, all these ‘companions’ are necessary; otherwise it is like treating yourself for a disease by reading medical books, or something similar.

A frog sat beneath a lotus flower. Instead of enjoying its sweet fragrance, it only ate dirty worms from the mud below. A beetle knew what was good in a lotus; it sat over it and enjoyed the fragrance.

If we give some time to reading holy books, some time to thinking of Param-Atman, then our wisdom matures; darkness no longer frightens us, and we attain supreme happiness. Not only so, but we begin to radiate happiness which affects the surroundings as well as those around us, be they men, birds or animals.

A story goes that a mere dog got rid of its wretchedness by the company of Yudhishtira.

But if we do not practice Satsanga in the above manner, then the thought of Param-Atman recedes to the background and Ahankara comes in front. Ignorant worldly people, however, see no sense in all this and treat it as a waste of time.

One Shri Malviya used to meditate on Param-Atman for two hours daily. One of his friends said, "Why do you sit idle for two hours each day? Instead of wasting them in this manner, you could do some work to benefit yourself or somebody else."

He replied: "All right, I am wasting two hours, but you are wasting the other twenty-two hours as well!"

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9th February: Ashram talk:

All living beings seem to be crying out for something or other. Among mankind some pray for wealth, some for health, some for property, some for fame, some for power, some for freedom from troubles, some for food and basic necessities during life. Moreover, all want what they ask for to be on a permanent basis; nobody wants merely a temporary cure or temporary riches. Also, we want these things in full measure; and nothing which is less than full is good enough, our object being to make and keep ourselves full in all respect.

The Scriptures belonging to every religion devote thought to the question of what among all these things is really worth praying for. If we study those Scriptures accessible to us, it would seem as if all of them want the Param-Atman because it is He only who is completely full in all respects and His fullness can never decrease. All the rest are neither full nor permanent. Thus, people really seem to be wanting the Param-Atman though they do not realize this.

Ravāna (in the Epic Ramayāna, the opponent of King Rama) had a big kingdom, a big family, a big palace, a big army, a big treasury, and what not. Everybody looked at him with awe and reverence, ready to carry out his commands. And yet not only was he not at peace, but there came a time when he lost all and nothing remained.

When one is a child, one wants toys; when one is a boy, one wants education; when one's education is over, one wants employment; when one gets employment one wants promotion. Thus, from the beginning to the very end, there is never contentment.

The great Moghul Emperor, Akbar, while out hunting, once had to spend the night in the jungle. Unable to sleep owing to the noise made by jackals, he asked why they were crying. Someone said that it was on account of the cold. Akbar ordered blankets to be distributed to the jackals, but still they went on crying. When Akbar again asked the reason, he was told that it was on account of their joy at getting the blankets!

In this way satisfaction in stillness and peace never comes to us, and we always go on crying!

The remedy is devoting yourself to Param-Atman. With this, all the unnecessary thinking of worldly needs comes to an end; and thereafter is succeeded by Realisation of Param-tman. Only then is there complete satisfaction; wanting nothing, we feel full. A union takes place between the full self and the full Param-tman. These two aspects of fullness mingle inseparably, never to part again.

Though Param-Aman manifests Himself in everything, everything suffers some kind of pollution, yet Param-Atman Himself always remains unpolluted; just as gold remains gold, even after being shaped and reshaped a thousand times into various ornaments. As long as we do not know Param-Atman, our belief in Him remains half-hearted; only when we know him does our belief become firm and unshakeable.

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(see also talk of 16th February, p.112)

10th February: Ashram talk:

If we do not see Param-Atman everywhere in the vast field of creation, and do not enjoy its sweetness, and are not filled with joy by it, then we really see nothing at all. Then our practice lacks impetus. So Param-Atman is in everything. Let your heart be filled with joy on seeing how Param-Atman manifests in everything. Then, if Param-Atman lives in your whole vision, He also lives in your heart.

A housewife stood at her door looking her best in an attractive costume and make-up, waiting to receive her husband back home from work.

A Mahatma passed that way, and he fixed his eyes on her. There was a volley of protests that a Mahatma should be the last person to stare at women; some even threatened to lynch him.

The Mahatma said, "I am only admiring the art and the beauty of God's creation. I have nothing in common with you, who call yourselves men or women, though you are made of the same flesh and blood in each case." And he walked away.

Indeed, despite all the visible differences, there are more similarities than dissimilarities between men and women. A real-life example (story) illustrates the point:

A woman managed to sneak into the male police force. She put in long years of service undetected, performing her duties creditably. But when retiring, she revealed the truth. Everyone was surprised, and she was rewarded for faithful service instead of being prosecuted for impersonation!

There are two kinds of worlds, soft and hard. Similarly, there are men, soft and hard. Those who are soft in nature will benefit from belief, while those who are hard in nature will benefit from thought. Believers would ordinarily shun thinkers, and vice versa.

But both can attain fullness, and if they can be brought to coexistence in a group, they are good for each other.

Someone argued that Sanyasins shunned work and were therefore dead people for all practical purposes. But really dead is the one who considers himself to be only the physical body, which is mortal and full of ignorance, and not the one who considers himself to be the Atman, which is immortal and full of knowledge.

The path to Param-Atman via Knowledge is beset with many obstacles, which are such that only a few can get through. Even when a major progress has been made, the greatest risk comes towards the end where Maya tries to beguile us. If we begin to falter at that stage, then a downfall takes place which undoes everything. Pleasant impediments, being of a tempting nature, are actually far more dangerous than the unpleasant ones, because the former possess more appeal than the latter. It is attachment to worldly things which is the root of all troubles.

Either you accept the Param-Atman first and then proceed to know Him, or you try to know something first and then accept. The important thing is confidence and not effort. If you go on living in the present, then the past and the future would take care of themselves.

For raising the thought-level, thinking of Param-Atman is the right thing. If you think that everything is Param-Atman, then love deepens. But if love decreases, we fall. Actually, it is love which is our greatest asset.

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12th February: Ashram talk:

For controlling the flood of a river we have to do two things: (1) building a dam, (2) taking out a canal. A canal reduces the volume of water in the main stream, making control easy. Similarly, for controlling our thoughts, let us divert some of them towards a holy direction, and let us raise an obstruction towards the unholy direction. Holy thoughts often take us to the company of holy men. This, in turn, creates in us an objective judgement, which is helpful in realising Param-Atman. But really, holy company is most difficult to find in the materialistic world of today. If we are lucky enough to get it, and our Chitta becomes absorbed in it, then reaching Param-Atman does not remain difficult. So holy thoughts and actions do not by themselves carry us direct to Param-Atman, but they can take us to holy company which, in turn, leads us to Param-Atman.

The speciality of human birth is the possession of a pure judgement. This, if taken advantage of, takes us to holy company; and there we find the key which unlocks all secrets. It frequently happens that if one secret is unlocked, the unlocking of others follows. In the eyes of thinking men, liberation and bondage are merely a drama. Actually, none is in bondage. Had there been a real bondage, it would not have been possible to undo it. We only think we are under bondage, and liberation only means removal of this thought. Birth and death are also a drama; nobody can experience his own birth or death; we can only hear about it from others, whereas statements of others can always differ and therefore cannot be regarded as trusted.

We go on criticising and criticising, little realizing that criticism demolishes much and builds little. Our powers of reasoning also disprove more and prove less, even on the worldly plane. But Param-Atman is beyond human reasoning. You cannot advance sufficient reasons to satisfy everybody about even the existence of Param-Atman, not to speak of reaching Him, through reasoning. What we can do is to cleanse the heart; then He shows Himself up on his own accord.

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15th February – personal advice:

Questions from R:

S. (1) You want to know, from all the discourses you have had with me so far, what exactly is the most important for you today? My difficulty is that, unless I can recall all you asked and all I said in reply, I cannot be in a position to say that. Roughly, however, it may suffice to indicate that the gist of all that should be –

- a) Physically, you devote yourself to universal service, considering yourself everyone's servant.
- b) Devotionally, be magnanimous and give importance to the Supreme Power, keeping in mind its unlimited benevolence.
- c) Intellectually, you identify yourself as One with Param-Atman, who witnesses everything and shows Himself in all the forms you see.

(2) You say: "It seems impossible to give it all up just yet, but I can keep it usually to only 2 days a week ...."

Now, giving up can be done mentally and intellectually at all times and in all conditions. In this, there is no question of today or tomorrow, or of one or two days a week. Practise giving up all the time. You just consider the body, the mind and the intellect as belonging to Param-Atman, and as such, offering all these to Param-Atman. This is what 'giving up' means.

3) You seem to ask how to maintain Sattva.

If Rajoguna and Tamoguna arise during the prevalence of Satoguna, then they would be ineffective. For this, you should off

and on recall the idea of your real Self, and at the same time keep yourself engaged in doing service (which is your duty). Then, because of Satoguna intervening between Rajoguna and Tamoguna, the latter would not affect your Antahkarana notably. A little of Satoguna will cure much of Rajoguna and Tamoguna, just as a small quantity of medicine cures a big disease. Or, say, just a little match-stick can burn down a mountain of cotton.

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15th February: Ashram Talk:

No worldly action, however good, can be entirely free from evil. No worldly pleasure can be obtained without causing pain to someone. Every sinner has a virtue. Should we, then, abstain from action in order to get away from evil?

The way to rid oneself from evil is to cultivate the attitude that it is nature that is acting through the body, and not the Self. The body is the machine of nature to produce action. Your Self is only the witness, and not the doer. It is through nature that Param-Atman is making the whole universe dance, but He does not dance Himself. He makes our Manas, Buddhi, etc., dance; but none can make Him dance. He is the Reality and the Truth, and there is no place where He is lacking. The states of Chitta are not the states of Atman. Meditation, practice, Samadhi, etc., are all states of Chitta. Even digging the ground for the service of Param-Atman is heavenly, while even worship of Param-Atman for worldly ends is hellish. For practising remembrance of Param-Atman, do not wait for a suitable opportunity. Do not think of today or tomorrow. You can do it whenever a feeling of devotion arises in your heart, paying no heed to the hindrances present.

This is how a doctor got over his hindrances: He had an ill-tempered wife. He got a telephone call to see a patient at 8 o'clock one night. The wife said that the dinner would be ready at 9 o'clock and that he could have it when he got back. The doctor said that he would be back by then. But he was held up till midnight when the wife had gone to bed and the dinner had got cold. On hearing the horn of his car, the wife woke up and started nagging the doctor. He put the dinner on her head.

“What do you mean?” she asked with double anger.

“I am heating my dinner. It has got cold,” answered the doctor.

Someone asked a Mahatma the way to get to the Param-Atman. The Mahatma told him to run. 'Is running the way to Param-Atman?' 'Maybe, but not the only way.'

Similarly, remembering the Param-Atman can be one way, but not the only way. Service also can be one way, but not the only way. No one way can be universal.

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16th February: Ashram talk:

This continues the same theme as His Holiness's discourse on 9th February (p.102) and shows that only after becoming acquainted could one become devoted:

Normally, it should be the incomplete who would seek the complete. Therefore, one who is already complete should have no necessity to seek the complete. But, strangely, it is only the completed Being that would seek the complete Param-Atman. It is so because it can only be the completed Self which would automatically go into the thought of Param-Atman as soon as it sits down quietly. As long as anything else can attract you, be sure that Param-Atman is far away. After all you cannot ride two horses at the same time.

As Param-Atman is all-powerful and limitless, it is obvious that no bondage could tie Him. But it is strange, again, that strings of love and Bhakti can do so. We know that only acquaintance can create love. Param-Atman is so beautiful that the more we get acquainted with Him, the more we get filled with joy – this creates Bhakti automatically and necessarily. Then, acts of worship become redundant. They, however, constitute a preliminary necessity.

It should be understood here that that so-called 'devotion' (which we can attempt before acquaintance), is a forced phenomenon and unreal, while that which sets in inevitably after acquaintance is real. Then our body, mind and all the possessions become dedicated to Param-Atman, and this dedication itself becomes the worship of Param-Atman. Then we eat, drink, act, etc. for the sake of Param-Atman

and do nothing for ourselves. Everywhere and in everything we see nothing but Param-Atman. This is a stage of absolute intimacy with Param-Atman, and Bhakti is just another word for this stage.

Now let us revert to the question of acquaintance once again. Without being acquainted with a thing, any love or worship offered to it would be insincere. The question, therefore, is how to acquire this acquaintance. Worldly acquaintances can be got by trying. But Param-Atman is outside the worldly sphere. So human attempts to catch Him all fail, unless and until he brings Himself (comes) within our grasp. This He does as soon as he sees that we deserve it. So, what we should do is to deserve it.

Holy company provides a training ground for all this. One of the things we learn from it is that the deepest possible relationship that can exist between two things is that which exists between our Self and Param-Atman. All other relationships are less. A realization of this fact can give a lot of Bhakti, and we reach our goal.

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22nd February: Ashram talk:

As compared with the lower animals, the development of power is more marked in the human being. This power resides in the Antahkarana.

Now take the case of an electric bulb. We generally see that a bigger bulb is more powerful in respect of giving light. Therefore a question arises: what is it that should matter – the size of the bulb or the light it gives? If the bulb is blue, the light appears to be blue; if it is red, the light appears red; if it is clear, the light appears clear; if it is dirty, the light appears dirty. In spite of all this, the light itself was the same in each case. It was neither intrinsically blue nor red nor dirty.

Just as the differences are created by the bulb while light remains the same, similarly the differences in power displayed by men are created by the Antahkarana, while Param-Atman, the source of Power remains the same always. From poets the same power expresses itself as poetry, from scientists as science, from lawyers as law, from soldiers as soldiery, from athletes as athletics, etc. Some manifest the power more and some less, but the power itself is neither more nor less from case to case.

Certain things are considered pure and others impure; but Param-Atman, the basis of all, is One and the same. How does purity and impurity come in? The reason lies in the two phases of power – “Vidya” and “Avidya” (knowledge and ignorance). This in turn gives rise to two kinds of Nature in creation – pure and impure. And all the time there is a process going on tending to set right the things that have gone wrong owing to Avidya.

(If a pot goes out of shape, the potter would undo it and make it again.) If a part of a machine does not come up to the

correct specifications, the factory recasts it as required. The material does not become useless, but is used again to produce the correct thing. Wrong things are being constantly turned into right things.

All these corrective processes are going on in nature, not in Param-Atman. After all, nature is just another word for behaviour.

Nature is not free to act independently. The power puts up various shows to please its Master. Nature, owing to its subordinate relationship with Param-Atman, wants to win His favour. This can only be done by producing things which He can like, and only the well-produced things would be liked.

Our hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc., are intended by nature to act correctly, so that Param-Atman may be pleased. But owing to ignorance, we believe that they are meant to please the world!

Though Param-Atman is limitless, yet we have to see Him in the limited things first. Seeing Him in the limited things would eventually lead us to the unlimited Param-Atman. The inertness of the Chitta stands in the way of realizing Him. Love has the power to remove this inertness and give us a glimpse of Param-Atman.

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12th April – personal advice

Questions from R.

S.        ANTAHKARANA. You are right in saying that it is an “inner organ” or a cell, that is not physical in the sense that it can be seen. From this Antahkarana light is felt in the shape of Ahankara, Buddhi and Manas. It is dealt with at length in books on the Indian philosophy. Its influence is particularly seen in the waking and dreaming states. During dreamless sleep it is quiet. In the Turiya state it is extremely lacking.

THINKERS WANT NOTHING, NOT EVEN GOD. (see p.92): This means that they realize that everything belongs to Param-Atman and is inseparably related to Him. Therefore there is no dearth of anything for them. When there is no dearth the question of needing or wanting would not arise. Those who are surrounded with needs and wants, in reality, do not want the Param-Atman but the fulfilment of their wants and needs through Him. Such a person has neither love nor knowledge.

MAKING FRIEND OF BUDDHI. Buddhi always tries to follow the Atman. Manas is its child; but when Manas begins to draw it, then it deviates from its Master and bends towards the Manas, and the Manas follows external pleasures.

Therefore, when the Buddhi is free to love the Atman, and Manas follows Buddhi, deficiency vanishes and sufficiency reigns supreme in which nothing can be lacking.

The next answer referred to a member of the S.E.S. who, given the same Mantra by another organization three years ago, and again by R. in March, had found it totally impossible to use it without bad effects.

TROUBLE WITH THE MANTRA. There are many Mantras – Ram, Krishna, Shiva, etc. Any one could be used. I feel that in this particular case there is some old impediment in the life of the person concerned which prevents him from pronouncing the Mantra and creates contrary feelings. For example, the sound of a particular musical instrument can make some dogs howl. To change the feelings you can try “Shiva” in this case.

(N.B. “Shiva” is pronounced with short “a”)

On 16th April R. wrote chiefly to wish His Holiness the utmost refreshment on his impending visit to the Himalayas – last year he had not been able to go and had had to endure exceptionally hot weather owing to the failure of the monsoon.

R. also mentioned the large group in Wellington under Mr. Howitt who have recently joined us in order to get the Shankaracharya's words and influence direct. The group had written to ask for some firsthand token of authority to go ahead. Could His Holiness find time to give our interpreter a verbal message conveying that authority?

On 25th April Interpreter Dixit wrote as follows:

“Your letter of 16th April arrived yesterday, i.e., well in time. His Holiness is glad to know that so many people connected with him round the world through you and Mr. Allan are sending love and good wishes to him for a refreshing stay in the mountains during the hot weather. He has asked me to convey his thanks to all of them.

His Holiness's verbal blessings to Mr. Howitt, as best as I can render it into English, is as follows:

“I send my good wishes and blessings to you, Mr. Howitt, and to all the members of your circle for your continued progress and success in stage after stage of your path in the Holy Tradition.”

His Holiness is going away on 30th April and hopes to return to Allahabad about 8th July.”

The sequel: Part of a letter, May 3rd, from a New Zealand student to a friend in our School in London:

“Tonight was the next-to-last big lecture for this term, and what a wonderful experience it was. Mr. Howitt was inspired by the personal message of love which he had been sent by His Holiness, and this love passed through him and permeated every being in the room. One felt that a firm foundation is now permanently laid here in the hearts of all, and the real work may now begin in the manner in which it is received from His Holiness and the doctor ....

Mr. Howitt himself abounds with gentleness and understanding, though with a confidence, sincerity and enthusiasm that he has never been able to show before. His own belief has been an inspiration to many ....

(M.L.)

29th April: Ashram talk:

LOVE is the motive force behind all the processes at work in the world to sustain it. It could never be sustained without love. In the case of human life its examples are the love of parents, the love of brothers, the love of friends and colleagues, etc. Even the behaviour of insects and moths seems to be based on some form of love. So much so that the ultimate cause of hostility is also love, because hostility springs up when love is hindered. Thus a duality of love and hostility prevails everywhere. We want a thing that we love; if we do not get it, we turn hostile.

A love free from the above duality is true Love. [Love for a thing which is not there is deception.] The whole drama enacted by Param-Atman depicts this one thing only, but there is none to understand it.

As it were, a perennial game of hide-and-seek seems to be going on. We are all seeking something. Some seek it in annihilation, some in creation, some in light, some in darkness, some in intellect, etc. Actually it is Param-Atman that all are seeking, and Param-Atman is hidden in all these and in everything else. But, while seeking, people have forgotten what actually they are seeking.

A man wanted to go to his father-in-law's place to meet his wife. He went to the railway station where the train was standing at the platform, and he shouted at the booking clerk, "A ticket to my father-in-law's place, please!"

"Name of place, please!" insisted the booking clerk.

"Oh, my father-in-law's place! Please! Please! Quick!"

"Just tell me the name at once."

“I’m telling you, my father-in-law’s place. For God’s sake, quick! the train is about to start!”

And the train started, leaving the man behind.

Something like that is happening to all of us.

Maharshi Raman went on meditating for fourteen years over the question: “Who am I?” As soon as he was on the right path, it took him only a minute to realise that he was everything.

When Rama was searching for Sita in the forests, he was so much lost in his thoughts that he forgot everything about himself. He asked such questions from Lakshman: ‘Who am I? What is this? What is that? Where am I? How did I get here?’

When Lakshman reminded him, he picked up his senses but lapsed into senselessness soon again. Over and over these questions were asked and answered but forgotten again and again.

This is what is happening with all of us. In a state of perpetual senselessness, we have been searching for something without finding it. We want to know what we are. We want to be happy. That is, we are seeking Param-Atman. But Param-Atman is sitting in everything, though there is a curtain of ignorance between Him and us.

We should see Param-Atman in everything. If we do that, we receive special favours from Him. Then this curtain of ignorance lifts up and the Maya – which has been cheating us all the time – no longer does so and begins to help us instead.

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5. APPENDIX: Conversations with Dandi Swami

R.A. Among His Holiness's disciples in the Ashram was Dandi Swami Bhagawatananda Saraswati who, we understand, had been a Judge before becoming a Sannyasin seven or eight years ago. He is a very learned man and has written an eighteen volume commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita. He speaks perfect English. Perhaps because of this, perhaps for other reasons as well, His Holiness decided that we should put questions direct to this Swami who would reply in English. It was at first indicated that when this method was adopted His Holiness would leave us alone with the Swami. In the event, however, he remained with us throughout the whole of every session.

The Swami is an intellectual man wholly devoted to His Holiness but with a somewhat rigid approach as can be judged from some of the quotations which follow. His Holiness is, of course, aware of this and has subsequently written softening the line taken by the Swami in certain respects. For example, where the Swami insists that there is an absolute predestined quality about every action, His Holiness subsequently made certain amendments (see letter dated 12th November). It will also be seen that the Swami himself later modifies his first unequivocal statement on this subject.

The Swami was exceptionally verbose and repeated himself a great deal so this record, though it contains much direct quotation, in many places paraphrases long and academic discourses.

Thursday, 5th October, 1972:

Mr. Lucas: What is needed to ensure that we take right actions in our lives, and come to the right decisions? Some people maintain that the Meditation alone can guide them. Do you feel it can do so on its own or, if not, what else is needed?

In our Western teaching we were told that ‘man cannot do anything’; what is needed for people to do something?

D.S. The first thing is to consider why you do actions – why are actions necessary at all? Why are we prone to bad actions not right actions? If God is immanent everywhere in every part of our body, how are we, as individuals, capable of bad actions?

He went on to give the example of the cinema and the white screen which is there both before, during and after the show. You can take Param-Atman, or the all-pervading Consciousness, just like that.

The first thing you do is to put out the light and shut the doors. Then the reel is focussed on the screen. First, by the shutting of the door and putting out the light, you are prevented from seeing the white screen; then the reel is focussed on it which has no reality of its own. If the door was open and the light on you would not enjoy the cinema .....

He spoke of the all pervasive influence of God, or Param-Atman, or any of the other names given in the different religions – Allah, Krishna and so on; whatever name is given the personality is the same. Like a man who can be called the son of his father, or the son of his father’s father, or his mother’s son – he is the same person. The all-pervading Consciousness is the substratum of all our individual souls. Although there are different names in different religions, there is no difference as far as the spirituality is concerned in the different religions.

F.R. By mind, do you mean Buddhi?

D.S. Mind, by its imagination, takes a reel and focuses it on the substratum. Supposing you wish to go to India but have not yet planned how you will be going – you think of all the different courses – by ship, train, air, etc. That is the function of mind (Manas?).

Buddhi determines and eliminates, and chooses one thing.

And then Ahankar, ego, says this is my action, and then all this is recorded just like the tape-recorder or gramophone. This whole thing comprises the act of the individual.

Antahkaran is the inner instrument.

We have external instruments – the ear, eyes, tongue, skin, and nose - five external organs to take the experience of the outer world. We have four internal instruments which comprise the soul. But the internal things must attach themselves to the external as well to manifest. Your eye may see something, but unless your mind also takes it, it will not be experienced by you.

The internal instruments are mind, intelligence, ego and Chitta. Chitta sings the old songs – all our experiences of the past are recorded there – things of direct experience, and things from eternity which have not been fulfilled – although they have not been turned into practical experience, they are also recorded in Chitta.

. . . ego – mind – ego until it is your work –until it is you who is involved, ego is not in play.

F.R. In the West there is only one word for mind – whereas there is a difference between comparing, contrasting and the recording mechanism.

D.S. Mind is only to imagine – it cannot decide anything. It is intelligence which decides, and that is called Buddhi. You may think of many things, but you will take no action until the decision is made; and until you think it is your duty you won't do it, and in the light of past experience, which is where Chitta comes in. All this is necessary for action to take place.

Actually these are the reflections of consciousness itself. When consciousness is steady, there is no imagination; but when consciousness begins to imagine, it is the nature of consciousness. If you ask why consciousness imagines, it is like asking why ice gives coldness – no scientist can answer that – so there is a nature of consciousness itself which is called Maya. No-one can explain why it is there to you – it is the nature.

When you go to sleep, you never imagine you will be dreaming, but automatically the dream comes, and that is through the imagination of the mind. He does not want dreaming but they come in spite of this.

So also in regard to consciousness there is nothing to be achieved, but in spite of that it is the nature to reflect the glories outside. So the purpose of actions is just to glorify. In the same way as no-one can say why fire burns, no-one can say why the world is being reflected on the substratum. When it is static it is pure Consciousness.

Ego and consciousness are two different things. Ego in Sanskrit is called Ahankar.

Goldsmith who makes so many ornaments out of one piece of gold – the gold is in each part of the ornaments.

Ahankar is that which makes so many 'I's out of one.

Mind reflects the phenomenal world. Maya means the reflection or projection of names and actions of the substratum.

F.R. Is this illusion?

D.S. You can say that infinity can't be divided by infinity so it must be illusion. There is no place for the created world so it must be illusion; but supposing you mistake a rope for a serpent in the dark – the serpent is an illusion. but without the rope there could be no illusion. Mind is the reflector.

We can reverse the process and see reality only by right knowledge. Indeed, no action is possible until we go towards the substratum, itself.

You can say when you see the Thames on the screen, "I am seeing my own Thames," but if you try to touch it, you will find it is nothing – just the white screen.

Illusion is there because we are not taking the right things in the proper perspective.\*\*

When I talk of knowledge, we mean wisdom, the wisdom of Consciousness which always exists because it is Consciousness itself. Knowledge is like the water you get through the pipes, wisdom is the reservoir. Out of Consciousness we get Knowledge through the mind. Ananda is also its nature.

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\*\* If you say the world is an illusion, there must be a real thing behind it to give the illusion!

F.R. The most difficult thing is to differentiate between the pure Consciousness and our little reflections of consciousness.

D.S. If you have come from the city you will have to proceed along the roads you know to find your way back – to go in reverse. You may make all sorts of attempts to do the right thing, but right action is not possible if the base is ignorance. However hard you try to correct, you will need right knowledge. You will not be expected to do the right actions unless you have the right knowledge.

Now, is there any way to do right actions while working in the phenomenal world as it is? If your aim is to do the right thing, in spite of ignorance you will do the right thing. For instance, you would say truth is right action; so if you speak the truth that is right action. If you do not commit adultery that is right action. Right things do not have imagination; if you tell the truth, you do not imagine.

Truth, non-violence, abstinence – we have regard for these because they are going on the right way. If a man is going on the bad way, we have no regard for him. You have regard for the man who only keeps for himself what is necessary. For doing wrong actions you have to think of so many things and make so many plans – like the thief – so if your mind is involved in so many thoughts and plans, that will be wrong action. Everyone wants peace and happiness – both man and beast. If by doing anything you lose the peace of your mind, it will lead you away from happiness. Anything which does not mar the peace is therefore right action.

F.R. How could I give the answer to Mr. Lucas in two words?

D.S. Non-thought and peacefulness.

Now to turn to the question about meditation. Whatever one is doing, either directly or indirectly the aim is peace. You may labour hard and suffer many hardships, but you will be happy if you find peace at the end. Working for many years in an office – it is the pension at the end which gives peace without doing anything, which is the aim. Even the thief is looking for happiness, but through ignorance he does not know the object of happiness.

Meditation is necessary for this, and there are two sorts. In the West many people are interested in meditation for the powers and miracles it may produce, but that is not the real meditation. Meditation can also be a wrong action if it is not directed towards peace.

Meditation is the roof of the house, but unless you learn to climb the ladders, you won't reach it. If you try without, you will fall and break your leg and go to hospital.

In one type of meditation the imagination remains – such as meditating on the Cross. In the other meditation, the mind does not remain. There are seven stages:

(The Sannyasin went on to describe in detail the seven stages, of which the following is a brief resume.)

(1) The cleaning of the mind. If linen is soiled, however many times you dip it in dye, it won't take the colour; so before meditation can reflect the Truth, the mind must be cleaned and turned in the right direction. You cannot proceed East and West simultaneously. So it is necessary to cleanse the mind, particularly because it is the first manifestation of real Consciousness, and so is very close to real Consciousness. Until it is clean it won't reflect the pure Consciousness, like a mirror which is dusty or painted over. The mirror is still there, but it cannot reflect.

(2) Control. Here he talked about Truth, non-violence, continence, abstinence, non-greed and the non-accumulating of things. Keep the pitcher empty so that it may receive from above.

(3) Rule of life. Time and posture. Time should be fixed so that you don't have to think about it. If you have to think when you will do it, your mind will become active; whereas if it is regular you will just begin like drinking your early morning tea regularly at 8 a.m.

There followed some complicated instructions about the special posture – sitting on the ground to meditate, and locking the charge in the body to prevent it being conducted through you into the earth. If it is locked, it will reach the bottom and rise up.

He spoke of the aura which some of the elderly saints have – although they may be 90 or 100. They glow from the aura they have collected in this way.

(4) Breathing. A description of the fire from breathing through the right nostril, and the moon from the left, and the equilibrium in the middle, and if you make this connection it gives light.

Like the body, it does not feel pain itself – it is the mind which feels pain; the mind and the breath are brothers and affect each other. When the mind is disturbed, the breath is disturbed – when you are angry, you breathe heavily; you have to learn to control the breath.

Who is controlling the breath? Is it the intellect?

It is not the electricity which will give you light; electricity alone cannot give you light. You can have many bulbs in the house but they will not give light unless the switch is put on. It is the connection made by the switch which gives the light.

The ego makes the connection so the ego must be persuaded to go to the ‘Real I’. The connection between the consciousness and the body is the ego.

(5) Make your mind turn from outside towards inward things. Leave the external world by constantly reminding yourself of the illusory nature of the external world.

If you really know about mirages, even in a desert when you are dying of thirst you won't expect to get water from a mirage.

(6) Retention – continuous memory of the real thing like oil pouring in a continuous stream from a bottle. Your mind concentrated on a particular object through going inward, and inward on Step 5. Continuous memory of the Reality.

(7) What happens next? Through continuous memory of the Reality you forget yourself, and then you will have no thought; and even the object of your meditation and continuous memory will go away – that is the realisation of your own Self.

Friday, 6th October

There was meditation with His Holiness and then the Sanyasin came in to continue answering Mr. Lucas's question. Dr. Roles said he had many questions from people all over the world, which needed answers translated into several languages, and therefore we would very much appreciate short answers as we had so little time. Also he had been coming to see His Holiness for twelve years, and had heard many of the ideas before, and it was clarification on points rather than the full system of Knowledge about which the questions were being asked. The Sanyasin pointed out that unless you got to the root of the matter it was not satisfactory. Again, the following is a brief resumé, on "can men do".

The Sanyasin drew a diagram showing how the dreamer creates many different people and creatures who appear to move independently, but they are dependent on the mind of the dreamer. In talking of mind he drew first the Cosmic Mind with the creation as the cosmic dreamer and then the mind of man with his dreams. Out of the cosmic or collective mind of Maya all of us are controlled by the cosmic dreamer, and so we have no independent action. In deep sleep the subtle mind retains its identity, but does not set up actions. In your dreams if a man sees a tiger he is afraid and runs away from the tiger, but as both are not real he need not run because they are all created out of the same thing. Therefore, so long as you are in the individual state – thinking "I am an individual, and I am separate," this is ego and ignorance and you cannot act. But if you go to the Cosmic plane by such practices as meditation. etc., when you lift yourself from the individual to the Cosmic plane, then action is possible. On the individual plane you suffer, but on the Cosmic plane independent of body and senses, you enjoy the glory of the creation. In a drama whether you are playing the part of the hero or the brute you feel pleasure after the performance, because it is all one play, the prompter is the same for all the parts. If you simply witness the drama you enjoy it.

R.A. Who is "You" in this conversation?

D.S. (We find the Sanyasin's name is Dandi Swami Bhāgawatānanda Saraswati). If you go to the cosmic level from the level of pure Consciousness "I-ness" begins. As you come to the individual level it is more limited. He is referred to as Dāndi Swami (D.S. in this account).

F.R. Can one be told more about the place within the Antahkaran from which life can be regulated? (question from Mexico).

D.S. It is connected with the breath, but mind and breath are like Siamese twins. Life is breath. When there is no breath there is death. By control of breath, or by control of mind because both are co-related. You control your mind by means of devotion to God and breath by the way of Yoga – the 8-fold way. But by simple control of the mind you do not need all these processes. If the mind is fully controlled, the breath is also controlled. By devotion, surrender to God, there is no ego and neither mind nor breath can move. Surrender to God is devotion. The word is de vorere (from the Latin), which means “away” and “vow” – to take a vow – determination. You make a vow to give all to God. This is possible while you are working, or whatever you are doing. If you really recognise that God is omnipresent and in everything, you will not need the 8-fold path, the mind will be concentrated and you will see God in front of the mind everywhere. That is called walking meditation.

The habit of the mind is restlessness. If you bind a restless boy – after a while he will go to sleep. So also if you always keep God in front of the mind, then after a time mind will become quiet like the sleeping boy.

Devotion requires belief or faith. Faith is the support of mind, effort the support of yoga and discrimination the support of knowledge – discrimination between Self and non-self. You keep discriminating – “I am not this hand of mine which I see, I am not this mind, etc.” You remain the subject and you see all these parts as objects, and the whole subtle body and linga sharira becomes object and you remain the subject “I am the witness of the eternal dream”.

F.R. Question from New Zealand about meditation – Dharana.

D.S. Mind goes through three transformations in Meditation – concentration, Samadhi and total annihilation of mind. At first you are trying to direct everything towards God – I and God. Then in Samadhi only God remains, and you forget yourself. In both these stages some ego may remain, but in the third stage there is nothing – no ego. It is the pure Consciousness which has been there all the time like the sun. You have just removed the clouds. It is not the void – void and pure Consciousness are different – void is nihilism.

F.R. suggested we might do just that now – D.S. indicated we could not. He seemed to misunderstand what was meant, but went on –

One cannot do this just like that – meditation is the rehearsal. The real act is whether you can be like this in the

active world, be in the active world and not lose this. It is not just in the one or two hours meditation, but in the remaining 24 hours that is the real test of whether you have achieved this.

R.A. asks about the word ‘void’.

D.S. If you make the mind void you are experiencing void, and so there is still a knower present. You cannot make a void of the knower! When you get beyond the void to the next stage then that is Self-realization. It is not difficult because the Self is always there – it is like going for a bath with the towel round one’s neck and then looking everywhere for it. When it is pointed out that it is round your neck, you have not found it – it wasn’t lost – you just forgot it. It is the same with the Real Self - it is self-evident.

F.R. People all over the world who practice the meditation are asking how they can come in closer contact with the fully Realized man and his whole Tradition? Can they come in contact with his mind on the subtle level?, and how can they come in contact with the Being of the fully Realized man?

D.S. Certainly it is possible both in a physical and a subtle way. For this, regard and prayer are necessary.

He gave the example of the low-caste man who went to Dronācharya who was the great teacher of the bow and arrow, and longed to learn his art from him but was refused because of his low caste. But out of his regard for this teacher he made a clay figure of the teacher, and continually looked towards him and prayed to him. He did this in the forest, and then practised himself the art of the bow and arrow. Later he became a greater warrior, than the teacher.

Now you may ask – who is the guru – the guru was himself. If you go before a selection board choosing, say, officers, you will suppose that the selectors are superior in knowledge and experience to yourself? Now – did you select the Shankaracharya to be your teacher? So, who is the selector and who is the selected? Who is the superior – the “selector” will create guru out of you. Geography does not matter. It is intensity of desire for the guru which is necessary. Gave example from Ramakrishna to show the need for intense desire. With this intense desire for a teacher, if it is necessary, this will bring a physical body to you; if it is not necessary, it will bring the real Knowledge to you.

F.R. said you needed to practise this, and D.S. said, Yes, it was like milk – you could see or smell milk and you would not be nourished by it – even if you drank it, you would not be nourished unless you could digest it.

Saturday, 7 October

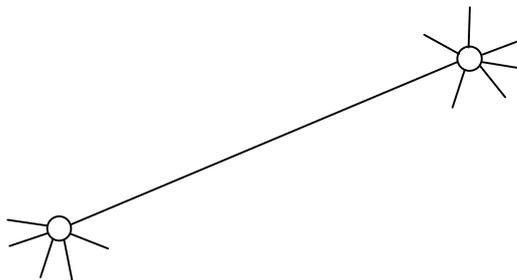
Individual minds (limited power)  
After meditation with His Holiness, and in his presence, we continued to put questions to Dandi Swami:

D.S. You were asking yesterday morning about the transmission from the guru to the disciple. I am just giving myself as an example of that. Ordinarily I am not giving advice, even if asked for, until I am sure that the man asking has got the greatest regard for me, and that he will root out his doubts and accept what I say. That is our way – that until the man has an unflinching regard for you do not speak out, so personally I usually keep my rooms always closed. Now His Holiness ordered me to try and solve the question which you will ask. You may have noticed that whenever you ask a question, I do not stop to think about it – do not pause for the answer, but at once give you the answer. How does this happen? Realised souls are generally always established in the Cosmic Mind, or what is called super-mind or super-consciousness. There are four\* states of consciousness:

- 1) Unconscious state of deep sleep.
- 2) Dreaming state or sub-consciousness, where we are dreaming but do not know we are dreaming.
- 3) The state where we are conscious of our dreams.

\*(Note: He changed it to 4, but only described 3.)

Diagram:



It is the same process, but for the individual it has limited power – for the super-mind it is unlimited. For the individual the power is limited to the experiences in the conscious medium. When the man has only individual mind he cannot catch the transmission of the guru because he is separated.

Now, when I am speaking, it is only what His Holiness intends me to say. His Holiness transmits – I speak. Yesterday you said I was speaking too fast, but the ideas which His Holiness was transmitting were so full that I was trying to transmit all of them to you.

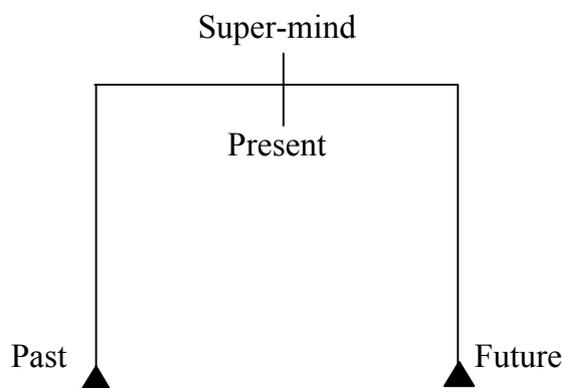
I give the example of Vivekananda who went to New York and was told he would only have five minutes to address an audience. He stood up intending to speak himself, and found he was dumb – but he remembered his guru, Ramakrishna, who was dead, and suddenly the words flowed in such a way that the audience was fascinated and he was allowed to go on much longer than five minutes. Although his guru was dead, cosmic mind could make this connection. Distance and place are not a bar, nor time.

So, if you had put your questions direct to His Holiness, he might have used different words, and answered in a very short way, but the essence would be the same. So don't think "I have spent all this money, and come all this way to hear His Holiness, and this old fellow is doing the talking."

R.A. In talking yesterday about the stilling of the restless mind, you said that we should seek to become the "witness of the eternal dream". I find this is possible quite often when I am playing a passive rôle, for instance listening to a business discussion. The moment my rôle becomes active, however, I find it almost impossible to remain detached. Have you any advice?

D.S. On the spiritual level there are only two tenses – past and future – because the present is always here. What is it which is always present with us? – it is super-Consciousness – God – whatever word you give it. This super-mind is the fulcrum:

Diagram:



Whenever you are thinking of anything you are in the past or the future. We are never in the present. Why is it? Either one is thinking of the past where you might have done something different, or you are in the future where you are always hoping – "I shall do..., I shall get ...". So long as your mind is engaged with either, the present is out of the picture.

In reality, the reel has already been made, and one is simply the witness at the cinema. If we don't like the reel we are always trying to change it, but if you went to the cinema and were sitting there and did not like what was being shown, you could not ask them to change the reel!

As soon as you realise it is just a reel which is already made, and which you cannot change, you will realise it is the will of God; then the mind will lie down and you will lie in Consciousness.

The technique is to find out how to make mind not think of the past and future. The present is not in our hands – as soon as you try to touch it, it has gone to the past. You either have to see the reel peacefully or leave the cinema!

If you regard both the past and the future as the will of God, you will not need to think about them and so you will be free of thoughts. So the technique is not to think of the past or the future. In the way of devotion just believe in God and realise that the whole cinema is God's will; so if you have done some bad things in the past, it was in God's will – Thy will be done. Secondly, in the way of Jnana – that means in the path of knowledge – once you have confidence that it is all God's will – that even a leaf on a tree does not move except at God's will, then you are free from the past and the future.

F.R. Whether he is active or passive?

D.S. It all depends on the person – what path he has taken to.

R.A. We are trying to go on the way of the householder.

D.S. You can be doing many things, but you can offer them to God. At the end of the action you say “Swāhā”, that is, I surrender it to You. Like the sacrificial pyre which is burnt and offered to God – you offer each action to God. Therefore the worship of God should not be in a closed room; it should be while you are acting, drinking, sleeping, walking. As soon as you have done it, you say; “It is not my acting, drinking, etc.” I am only the instrument, and you sacrifice it to God.

We are like puppets, we recognise that we have no freedom and are instruments – you recognise that you have to play a rôle. Think of the money which the audience pays. Does it go to the puppets? Do they get pleasure from it? No – it goes to the one who controls them. So the results or fruits of our actions must be given to the one who operates us – they must be given to God. You can go on throughout the day like this. This is called the worship by work. You should not sit and be idle. Every work must be sacrificed to Him. Some puppets have to act saints and some ruffians. They each play a rôle. This should be our attitude. As soon as you are free from aspiration for the reward of the action, you sacrifice it to God; also you have to offer up your thought – your actions and your thoughts can be your worship – you need not only offer flowers; you can offer your actions and your thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent. Belief is the main support. He is the fount of all actions, and every action

must go to Him.

When linen is put in the fire, every bit is burnt whether it is soiled or clean, whether it was a King's or Queen's robe or a sweeper's.

You just have to have aim and attention on a particular goal. The difficulty comes from lack of determination. Just have faith that, according to His Will, everything is being done. The fire does not refuse to burn the dirty linen – it burns all – so you just have to offer up all your actions whether they have been good or bad. You have to sacrifice all the limited consciousness. Having fixed the aim, fix your attention on the aim with determination.

R.A. Would you say, then, that we can only get Self-realization through renunciation?

D.S. You have to sacrifice the past to the present and the future to the present – the Omnipresent. Renunciation and sacrifice are two different things – renunciation means giving up, but sacrifice is a worship. Renunciation can contain an element of ego.

F.R. Do you mean at some point you have to cease to be a householder – a doctor or a judge?

D.S. Ego should be limited – that is all. The perfection of life will be obtained when you empty yourself and let the Infinite fill you. You eliminate your ego, and go from the finite to the infinite, from the limited to the unlimited, from limited knowledge to unlimited Knowledge, from limited happiness to unlimited happiness.

M.A. Do you mean that the sacrifice is not a literal one but within you? Renunciation is within you – not necessarily physical renunciation?

D.S. Whether outside or inside, the same thing is there. Take a gold ornament: the gold is inside and outside; if He is Omnipresent He is not only inside but outside, so whatever you see you should mentally bow down. If it is a good part, you will say, "What a marvellous part You are playing"; if it is a bad part, you will say, "What a devil's part You are playing", but you should bow down just the same and sacrifice.

M.A. What I meant was – did you mean my husband need not necessarily stop being a business man, but he should do God’s business?

D.S. No – that is what I was saying about renunciation. Renunciation contains some element of ego. Now if I try to give up work, that means I am being egoistic, as if I can do it. I am the doer of the renunciation. The thing is this: by the constant sacrifice, when you will become constant in this, then the work will automatically leave you. You should wait until that time; you should not give up work which has been given you. The work will eventually leave you. Until that time you must act. For instance, after four days when you have gone, this work will automatically leave me – I am just waiting for that! (Laughter) Therefore a successful life does not contain renunciation – this has been the cause of all India’s troubles. For so many centuries we have been imbued with the idea that renunciation is the best course for Self-realization, but this has just led to inertia. This has just increased Tamas. We should be free from Tamas.

He then gave a description of the Three Gunas. Sattva has the function to manifest and lead to real happiness. Tamas has three functions – ignorance, attachment and negligence. One who renounces the world is only too ready to sit and accept gifts, but he has ceased earning so he can give no gifts himself. This is the state of inertia – you have your destiny but you are not acting to fulfil it. Because of this he will not progress, because ignorance will become deeper negligence of duty is apparent, and his attachment to trifling things becomes deeper.

Rajas – I must work – be active.

Diagram:



Rajas can go both ways – if you do good actions it will lead you to Sattva; if you do bad actions it will lead to Tamas. So it is better to have Rajas, but you will have to be careful that it does not lead you to Tamas because that is the greatest enemy in life. In Tamas you can just sit and say all this world is unreal so I don’t have to do anything, but as soon as 10 o’clock comes and you are hungry then you expect some food. That is why India is so poor. Man must work. The other manifestations of Tamas are when you put off things till tomorrow, or have such a fixed idea that you cannot hear any other arguments.

Rajas - I must do, I must achieve my goal. If it is a bad goal, as soon as it is achieved he will lie down – that is Tamas. If it is good, he will never rest and goes towards Sattva, and when he is still bliss follows.

Sattva is peaceful and blissful. Happiness depends on happenings, which means you have to depend on something else. Bliss is self-evident and depends only on blessings. When your mind is full of Sattva, it can reflect the present. That is real happiness. As regards renunciation which Mrs. Allan was mentioning, it is not a question of quitting anything. When you will come to the state where your mind is absolutely peaceful and serene then automatically the work will leave you. The work will leave you, you are not to leave the work. By constant sacrifice of your work You will come to this state. Worship Him with your work. If greed comes – if you say, “I am greedy”, you will be caught by your greed; but if you say, “God is present in the form of greediness”, it will leave you.

God created East and West, but if He had combined the two – the passiveness of the East and the action of the West, then everybody would have experienced the super-consciousness! But it is in the Drama – He has made us inactive and made you very active!

R.A. Of course, a lot of people work not for fame etc., but simply to keep alive.

D.S. There are good, bad and indifferent ways of life. Some people do not aspire, but that is indifferent way of life. You should always work for perfection. It is not just passing the time by good actions. Good actions must be done to make life perfect, so that we will not have any further care. As long as desire is there we will not be free, and just an inch below perfection leaves some desires. We should strive to make perfect each action which we do – go from the limited to the unlimited. From death to immortality.

M.A. Do you mean that whatever you are given to do you should do to the best of your ability – for the sake of God?

D.S. Yes, thinking that God has given me this rôle to play.

F.R. And this is our life - the life we are given is our field of work?

D.S. We should try to play our rôle very nicely, and with the

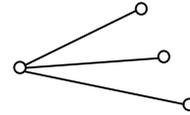
greatest regard to God. People say that in India, in spite of this spiritual tradition, the Rishis and leaders have suppressed the depressed classes, and have allotted certain work to the sweepers and they are untouchable. But this is not so – whatever rôle you have you can work for perfection. The sweeper can fill his basket, put it on his head and offer it to God just as well as a basket of flowers. God has given me this rôle, I must play it nicely – so he does his best and offers his basket to God.

In the drama there are many rôles – good, bad and others. Each rôle is prompted from the same book and by the same man – no work is bad and no work is good so long as the prompter is the same. If you play your rôle well the scenes won't touch you. Scenes and virtues are a mental reflection – it is ignorance – what is a scene to you, may not be a scene to me.

The soldier's rôle is to kill. If he says, 'I will not kill because non-violence is the greatest virtue,' then he will not be able to play his rôle properly. In the Gita Arjuna said to Krishna that he could not kill his preceptor, his teacher – although he is on the opposite side – it is better to beg than to kill my guru. Then Krishna reminded him that it was his duty to fight, and as he had not chosen his rôle – it had been given to him – he must do his duty whoever was on the opposite side. If we leave anything of our own accord that leads us to Tamas.

R.A. Are all three Gunas necessary?

D.S. Not necessary – they are part of life. Guna in Sanskrit means rope; there are these three ropes attached to the puppet making him dance. These are revolving always; sometimes you will feel Sattvic Guna – peaceful; sometimes you will feel I must do some action; sometimes you feel I must lie down; therefore the three Gunas are always revolving. The Creator of the show is making us dance.



R.A. But we have no choice?

D.S. As I told you yesterday, when you are in the individual mind you have no choice.

R.A. So we cannot eliminate Tamas Guna?

D.S. Yes, you can eliminate, because if you sacrifice each thing, then it is not Tamas. But if you say, 'Oh this work is too heavy, I won't do it', then you are working against His order and

that leads to Tamas.

Supposing you walk about 30 miles and say, “Oh, I cannot go a step further”, and actually feel that you cannot move another step; then a tiger or a serpent appears, are you unable to move? No, you have strength for another 3 miles at great speed! Therefore the “I cannot do this thing” is a mental thing – Tamas. In fact, you are always connected to the mains power. After a deep sleep you wake up and say, “Oh I slept very nicely” – now as soon as the mind is still we go to the super-consciousness. After this deep and dreamless sleep we feel restored and if disturbed say, “Oh I was sleeping so happily, why did you disturb me?” This happiness did not come from objects because no objects were there. In the same way if you go to the present – to the Omnipresent – you are restored.

Sunday, 8th October

R.A. Last Wednesday the Guru referred to the search for spirituality through the medium of action and the medium of renunciation. Could he say more about the medium of action?

S. As I said before, there are two different ways of approaching the liberation of mankind from human form. One is through activity towards Liberation, and the other is by renunciation – complete renunciation of the worldly life, and withdrawing oneself into such corners where one is not obliged to attend to any activity of the world. Of course he will take to the activities related to Liberation, but not related to the world. There are certain examples of this: Rāma, Vashishtha, and Janaka.

[Note: Rama was the incarnation of God who was the hero of the great Hindu epic – the Ramayana. King Janaka you have heard of through the stories His Holiness tells about him. Vashishtha we know little about, but the following words of Sri Ramakrishna refer to him:

Ramakrishna: He who has knowledge has ignorance also. ‘How amazing!’ said Lakshman to Rama, ‘even a sage like Vashishtha was stricken with grief because of the death of his sons!’ ‘My brother,’ replied Rama, ‘he who has knowledge has ignorance also. Therefore go beyond both knowledge and ignorance.’]

These three examples are exponents of this philosophy of liberation through activity. They were householders who were very famous men. One of the main facets of worldly anxiety is the fear and pressure attached to birth and death. By themselves they have nothing to do

with any sort of bondage – it's only when one takes them very seriously and treats them as real, then the bondage starts and the trouble appears. A man of activity would learn to discern what the Reality behind the appearance is and, although he would act in the appearance, he would always hold on to the Reality and thus avoid the conflict of pleasure and displeasure which seem to appear through birth and death.

For example, one knows, and everyone knows that one is a human being, and this human being, neither in his awake state nor in his dream state, or sleep state or any other state would ever think that he was not a man – he would never think himself a beast of any sort. In the same way, if one knew precisely and decisively that one is the Atman or the Absolute, then there is no reason to by-pass any worldly activities; one can sail through them by the virtue of reason, discernment\* and act as the situation demands and hold no Samskar for it.

[\* dis and cerno = I sift = insight.]

It is the birthright of human beings to walk on the earth but it is not necessary that they must also swim in the water, but they can learn to swim, and if they have learnt to swim they can walk or swim, whatever the circumstances may be; they will be able to do their job or cross the land or river whenever it is necessary. It is in exactly the same way that the human being can learn to swim through the world into the liberated land and act whenever the action is needed from him. This is the householder's way.

R.A.(to D.S.) You told us that the past and future is already printed on the cinema reel. Are the meetings that I have had with His Holiness and now with you, and whatever may follow from these meetings, also already recorded on the reel of my life, or is it possible that such an occurrence as these meetings may change my part in the drama?

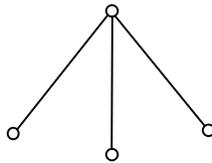
D.S. However much I may tell you that everything is predestined, or already recorded on the reel, you won't admit it because ego is there. Therefore, in spite of realizing that everything is predestined, everything is being directed by God Himself, your ego won't admit it. and will go on as if it is the doer. A story illustrates it:

On the mast of a ship a bird was sitting quietly while the ship left the port and was going out to sea. The bird was confident that it could fly the distance back and reach its own place. After a long time with the ship far out to sea, it was evening, and the bird was thinking that its children would be crying for it at home, and it made an attempt to fly home across the ocean. But it could not find the shore, so thought it must have mistaken the direction and returned to the mast for a rest. When it was rested it set off again in another direction, but the same thing happened – it could not find the shore because the distance was too great. It was not within the power of the bird to reach the shore. It went to the South, to the North, to the East and West, but in the end it realized there was nothing it could do, so it returned to the mast and once more sat quietly.

Now it was confident again, but in another way – not that “I can do”, but “I must go where the mast of the ship is taking me.”

So long as you are in the individual plane – ego plane – and not on the cosmic plane, you will be thinking that you can do it yourself.

Diagram:



Now, in every religion, in every Scripture, there are instructions to do this thing, do that thing, worship in this way. In this way you should correct yourself, do these pious actions, etc. What is the purpose of them? You will try to do it, and after many efforts you will become confident that you cannot do it. If I cannot get His help, then I cannot do anything. We find our life itself is in another person's hands. Until your individual ego is satisfied by various actions that it has no power, it won't rest. When you are fully convinced that you are not the power, you are simply the instrument. So, all these religious instructions are just to exhaust the ego; then ego will be sitting on the mast and the stage of "Thy will be done" will be reached, the Cosmic Mind will be reached. You cannot say, 'tomorrow I will do this with my hand' – it may be paralysed tomorrow; you cannot say, 'tomorrow I will see so and so' – your eye may be blinded; you have no control over any part of your body. So it is ignorance to think you can change it; you cannot change it.

R.A. But if liberation is already recorded, what incentive is there for me, now, to say try and get away from Tamas guna?

D.S. Just as you cannot create the cloud, or make it rain, but by the signs in the sky you can tell others, or be convinced yourself that it is going to rain, so there are signs for you on how to play your role. When you become the student of that, then only knowledge is necessary for your actions. In the ego plane we are in ignorance, but if with knowledge we can do the actions, then they do not harm us.

Since you have got the desire to hear His Holiness, that means they are signs that you are being attracted towards liberation. You cannot do it yourself, but these are signs. We could have a meeting in London, but thousands of Londoners would not come to hear, they would not want to hear and discuss these spiritual things. It is a grace sign drawing you towards Him. If you don't want to hear, it means he wants you to play the worldly role. That is why in the Vedas it says: "That those whom He will like to attract towards Himself, He will have them do good actions," and those He would like to play the role in worldly affairs from death to birth and from birth to death, He will have their work done in worldly way." Until He attracts you, you cannot proceed towards Him. But we have aspiration, and that is the significance of prayers. Through prayer, our minds become more and more purified to his Will, and then His reel is more and more reflected. In the ego mind we can change nothing, because we are just like puppets. (Prayers – God give me good actions – God let me do this or do that). Nature is doing it, everything is being done by nature.

R.A. But we can aspire ourselves? Is that in our own control?

D.S. Everyone aspires – even the devil .

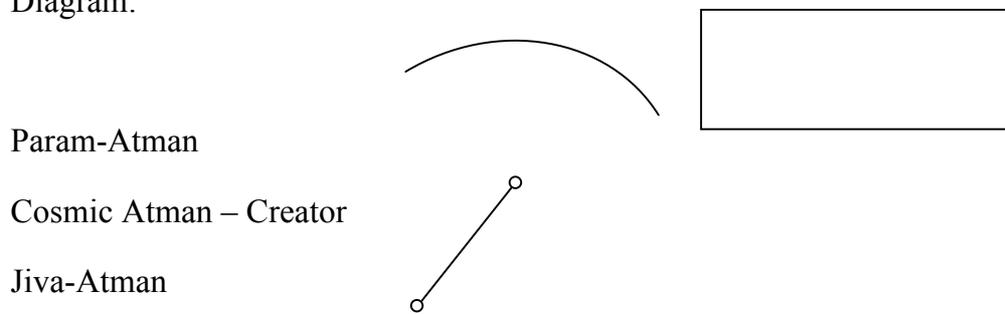
R.A. Do I have the option of saying my prayers, or not saying my prayers?

D.S. God is our own house. Our own Self is pure Consciousness. You do not require permission, or a licence to go back to your own house. We are always aspiring to go back to our own house because we want peace or happiness. No-one aspires for sorrow. Even a thief is aspiring, that through the benefits of what he steals he will get peace and happiness.

R.A. On that diagram which is Atman and which is Param-Atman?

D.S.

Diagram:



Param-Atman has two faces, just as the cinema screen has two faces - one side shows the film, the other side is white; in both faces the screen is untouched by the cinema show.

Param-Atman with the Gunas – with Maya, becomes Ishwara, the Creator, the Sustainer and Dissolver at the point marked Cosmic-Atman on the diagram. Our home is Param-Atman; we have taken to things superimposed on the Self or Jiva-Atman which do not belong to us – ‘I am father, I am mother’; these are just superimposed, but the Self is there throughout. We have created limitations for ourselves by our own imaginations – we have superimposed all these things. Cosmic Atman is less limited.

In our home we have perennial existence – Sat; infinite Knowledge is infinite power – Chit. Knowledge is power. For instance:

Take the small boy leading the elephant: it is not his physical strength which is leading the enormous elephant, it is his knowledge. Wherever there is knowledge, there is power. He knows how to conduct the elephant, therefore the elephant is controlled by him.

Perennial existence is called omnipresence;  
Infinite knowledge is called omniscience.

We are always aspiring for perennial existence because that is our home – we want not to die. Most of our aims – like storing money, etc. – are directed towards the wish to be immortal; it is inherent in us not to want to die. Even a child asserts his own knowledge when you try to show him something; he says, “No, it should be this way”. This is because he is a storehouse of infinite knowledge, and he is trying to assert it.

Thirdly, we want eternal happiness and bliss. That is Ananda, so that makes Sat-Chit-Ananda. You may say that if one wants to be immortal one must be mad, but since every creature of the world wants these three things, they cannot be mad.

Another thing we want is Godhead; we don't like to be controlled by others – we like to control ourselves and others to get everything. Even from the boy to the adult – from the fool to the most enlightened person, everyone wants this. So. when you say. ‘can you aspire’, I say aspiration is eternal.

(There followed the same story about the lioness and the cub who followed the sheep .....)

The story ended with the lion giving the cub the blood of a sheep to drink, and asked him if it was not better than the grass he had got used to eating. We have identified ourselves with the senses, like the cub, but they are only our instruments. When we have a Guru who can make us taste the bliss and show our face –have the reflection on us, then you will know that you are the lion and not the sheep. Then you will go to Him.

F.R. You spoke of the conquest of Ahankar by love and true Knowledge. Do you not think that there are a great many sheep who are imagining themselves lions?

D.S. To say “I am a lion” without right Knowledge is only cheating yourself. It is not a question of proving ourselves to others, but of being true to ourSelves. The body of the Realized man is

also walking, talking and going to the bathroom; the Reality is experienced within – it is not an external thing at all.

F.R. Ahankar is all the time imagining and attaching to this thing?

D.S. I spoke of the connection between the electricity and the bulb. That connection is Self, that means the super-Consciousness. The connection with the senses and the body with the super-Consciousness and the unconscious that is Ahankar – ego. Now as soon as Ahankar is detached, when the connection is off it has its own actions – just as inert bodies will move by the previous force, like a fan revolves even after the electricity is switched off. So from eternity you have been connected to this body and these senses, and though the connection is broken, it may move for 40 hours or 40 years due to the velocity, it is prompted by its previous velocity or momentum.

Diagram:



Now if you have painted a picture, or written a poem, you have brought out the ideas from within you and then you look at them with pleasure – you glorify yourself. So also the super-Conscious brings out all these bodies and glorifies Himself – it is the nature. There is no duality – it is only one – just in His imaginations the many are produced.

Now about this connection: he is limited because of his identification with the body – from saying, “I am this body, I am the senses”; when I identify myself with the mind or body, then I become blind. If you are physically blind, yet you still see inside – you don’t have to use your eyes to see or your nose to taste, because when in the dream I taste, this nose is not acting - I am doing it mentally. As long as you identify with these things whether external senses, or internal – mind, buddhi, Ahankar or chitta – these are all separate from Him.

Now if you identify with the super-Conscious, then this connection will be broken, and you will be free. You may say, ‘How can the body act without consciousness if this connection is broken?’ – it can go on with the velocity of the previous force, and will have to go on until this force is exhausted. Other people may say, ‘Although he is a Realized man, yet he is still suffering from so many diseases,’ but for himself he is not suffering –

the body is just going on by the previous velocity. He does not suffer – only in the eyes of others he is suffering, but he had detached himself. Whatever may happen to the body, he is not concerned with it; therefore he is liberated – liberation from the body and the functions of the body, destiny and all these things. When this force is exhausted his body will go away and it will not be re-created; whereas in the case of ignorance it will be re-created again and again.

Diagram:



We have a natural aspiration to go back to our own house; from a child to an adult this aspiration is there. Now if the aspiration becomes intense, and through the Grace of God, if he wants you to play the rôle of a Saint, you will become a Saint, otherwise you will become something else.

F.R. Our whole progress depends on discrimination - what is useful to Atman and what is not useful to the Atman; as a judge you had to decide guilty, or not guilty, true or false. I cannot see how you escape that way from duality and from the belief that everything is Param-Atman?

D.S. Even as a doctor when you prescribe anything, you will have doubts that the prescription may not be right, and if the patient is not cured you may worry that if you had prescribed something different it would have been better. The technique for a doctor, or anybody, is this: you go to the Void, and then you see the prompting yourself and you write it down. If you go to the Void, without any thought whatever, the prompting will come and you will write it. But never think about what will happen then. Then you will be doing the right action, because you will not be writing from your limited intelligence, but in tune with the Infinite. Even if the results are not favourable you must not repent over it, because you have acted as an instrument. Not only the patient will be cured nicely because of the infinite power – there is a spiritual medicine attached to the ordinary medicine – but you will be free from all doubts, that means for the future or the past.

If you try to do all actions in this way, you will find you do them without thought; you will always be establishing peaceful equilibrium, at the same time working with God. Working with the individual mind, it is always limited, but with the Cosmic Mind there is no doubt and no thought; that is peace, that is what we want. So in all actions go to the Void, see what promptings are given, be an instrument to manifest, work in tune with the Infinite.

Monday, 9th October

Owing to an infection Dr. Roles was unable to go to the Ashram. The others went, but as there would not be a session, they offered flowers and fruit to His Holiness in his private audience room and Dandi Swami asked for further questions to be delivered in the evening.

Tuesday, 10th October

F.R. His Holiness had given instruction to “pray to Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind”. and I tried every way for some time. But ‘mind’ never could do it. Then recently I found that something was praying. Who is it that prays?

D.S. There are two things called ‘I’ – the Great Self which is pure Consciousness, and the little self that identifies with the physical body and the senses. One wears temporary clothes, the other is pure, naked. The clothed one is praying to the naked one that he also may be naked. In the story of the lion cub, the lion had not become a sheep, he only thought he was a sheep. There was no physical change – only a different mental attitude.

Prayer is needed only so long as you don’t see yourself in the ocean of Consciousness; but in both those states the Param-Atman remains unchanged.

S.(intervening): The limited one is praying to the infinite. You cannot have complete happiness when you are limited, because there is still something left to desire. As long as the finite is not merged with the infinite, there will be desire, and so effort and prayer will be there.

A person once came and asked me: “If God is omnipresent and omniscient, then whose ignorance is it?” The answer was “You are in truth omnipresent and omniscient, and ignorance is only forgetfulness.” So the ignorance belongs to the person who is asking that question.

D.S. This is a very common question when doubts arise.

F.R. I am beginning to understand also that the film is already made – you cannot go to the cinema and ask them to change the reel.

D.S. But you can change the attitude of your mind.

S. There are two sorts of Meditation: one is natural and the other requires effort. God also is meditating in one way, but His meditation is natural; that means being conscious of His own Self. To be conscious of oneSelf in the continuity of that Consciousness is a meditation in one way. But Jiva-Atman thinking, “I am inferior; I must have something to achieve,” therefore he makes effort; that is the other sort of meditation.

D.S. If you want to help these people practically, it would be necessary to hold a conference of all these people asking these questions, and not only give them theoretical answers, but some practical demonstration – only then will they be convinced.

I am going on the 12th to such a conference where many Mahatmas will be going to mutually exchange experiences and ask each other questions. Yoga is a practical science. Theoretical knowledge stirs up faith, but only if they do it practically will they understand it. Even if I told you one hundred times what a mango tasted like, until you actually tasted one yourself, you would not know the taste of mango.

Once a young man went away, and on his return his uncle asked him what he had enjoyed most. He replied, ‘The Banaras mangoes.’ The uncle, who had tasted many fruits, pressed him to say why these mangoes were better. The nephew said he would bring him one next time he went there. But the uncle said he could not wait for that and asked him again to describe the taste exactly. So the young man mixed some sugar to resemble the sweetness of the mango, and some tamarind for the sourness of the mango. Now his uncle had a long beard, and the young man mixed the sugar and tamarind mixture with the end of his beard (to resemble the fibres of the mango) and told him to taste that as it was the best he could do!

They must have the taste.

J.R. asked if Dandi Swami would indicate to His Holiness the line he was taking.

D.S. spoke briefly to His Holiness, who appeared to start speaking, but D.S. continued:

Take Meditation which has many sides, and is not a panacea for all problems – each man is an individual and requires individual attention. So the advice of one man is necessary so that they will not be diverted, and to satisfy them practically. This is how you can spread the yogic ideas. It is a combination of knowledge and practice but, like building a building, the cement and bricks are not enough; you must have foundations.

F.R. The fact is, all these thousand people now know His Holiness's voice very well. They distinguish it from any other voice, and that is why they send these questions to him in order to hear his voice.

D.S. Of course they have a great regard for him, and intense faith in him; that is why you are spending so much money to come here to hear him. But - then Dandi Swami gave a description of his own personal experience: how, before being initiated, he followed the custom that a disciple must be with the guru for a long time until he is convinced that he is of the right strata for him, and then only he will be initiated. He had one guru when he was young who taught him mostly about work on the physical level. Then he went to a second guru when his level changed. That guru died so he had to seek the advice of another guru. He studied 7 years in Benares. When the time came for renunciation, he came and stayed here.

In personal life there are so many stages to go through. We only change the guru when you can go no further with him. What may take five months to learn by theory, may only take five minutes with practical experience. Take anatomy: to learn Gray's Anatomy by just reading it and visualising it would take five years, but through practical experience of dissecting a body you could learn anatomy in one month.

Now our Shankaracharya: he is the receptacle of all experience. He is Yogi, he is Dhyani, he is Jnani himself because he has to combine all these factors within him, otherwise he would not have been called Jagad Guru. He is competent to give practical experience in all these aspects. All your questioners are honest seekers, but yoga is a practical science, and they need practical demonstration.

Answers to questions handed in:

- (1) R.A.'s question as to whether in predestination these meetings with His Holiness are also on the reel, and will they change his part in drama?

Ans: Past and future is already printed on the cinema reel. Every incident that has happened, is happening, and will happen is already on the reel of the Cosmic mind. If the change is on the reel, then it will happen. Whether there will be change will be indicated by signs. When you come to His Holiness or when you are having spiritual discussions, that means indications – the change is inevitable. The cause and effect are in the realm of Maya. Whenever you see the cause (clouds) you are bound to admit it is going to rain. Now this meeting is a cause, and because this meeting is of a spiritual nature, then change will come.

- (2) M.A. asked Dandi Swami about being either in ignorance or “at home”. Asked if there were different levels of man – stages on the way – some nearer home and some further away?

Ans: I said you have a right to go home at any time. Now this home is not separate from you; if it had been separate then you would have needed mile-posts and signposts. It is like the towel round your neck I told you about. You have an attraction for the towel, and maybe hatred for the servants you think have taken it; but it was just forgetfulness. Ignorance is not a new thing it is just forgetfulness of Reality.

You ask, What is the indication of whether I am going nearer home or receding from it? The only indication is the degree of thoughtlessness (absence or freedom from thought?). If you are firmly established on the idea that everything is the Will of God, everything is predestined, everything is on the reel, then you cannot think about it. Therefore the degree of freedom from thought indicates whether you are nearer or receding. If you are thinking of the past and future – what I should have done, or will do – that means you are receding; but if you are peaceful in spite of what is happening round you, then you are nearer – going back to your own home. If you are imagining in ego, you are far from home.

- (3) Question from Barrister (K.J.) Asks about Self-realization for the family man earning a living. Refers to statement that women and gold are enemy of liberation.

Ans: Women and gold are not at all obstacles in themselves; it is only attachment to them which is an obstacle. They may be very

helpful. Nothing is an obstacle if there is no attachment.

He also asked about Patanjali. Patanjali is the author of Patanjali, the name of the Yoga sutra which is a monumental work of analysis and synthesis. Sutra means thread, and it consists of many many flowers, like separate threads, woven into one garland. All modifications of the mind are covered by the Yoga sutra like a garland. Karma yoga means to do work according to your natural propensities, but doing the work directed towards union with God. Then work becomes Karma yoga. In the Yoga sutra every word is pregnant with teaching. He has analysed mind thread-bare. It is a most wonderful book – no-one, no saint, can give an experience which has not been covered by Patanjali in the Yoga sutra. Therefore all Yogi teaching, whether directly or indirectly, is based on Yoga sutra.

Wednesday, 11th October

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D.S. To continue with the question from the Barrister:

He asked about helping his children to find a teacher and mentioned they were keen on their Church and reading of the Scriptures. This is very good, but it should not limit them. They can go from this to the universal way. First go to church, then see the church manifested in the whole world, not just the building but the whole universe. And help them gradually to see that Christ is the messenger of God, but they can also see everybody as the Christ. So from the individual aspect to the universal aspect.

F.R. It is the limitations that cause all the quarrelling.

D.S. You should stick to your own religion and Scriptures, but widen them to merge into the infinite. The parents can help the children by practising themselves – example is better than precept. It's no use saying to children, "You must read the bible, you must love God"; it will be impossible for them unless you practise it.

Now the question from his wife about putting spiritual things, or looking after her family first? This is a wrong idea; these things are not separate. The art of work is that, if you once believe that God is everywhere, then your children also represent God. By serving the family you are serving God. God does not remain isolated in the jungle or in the atmosphere. If you have faith, regard and fidelity, and do not waver from that, then God will be present to you all in parts of your life.

An atheist used to say all the time "God is Nowhere". He said it all the time, and he wrote it everywhere, even on the kitchen wall. When he was nearing death, his limbs would not move and his vision was failing and blurred. He looked at the wall and saw "God is Now here". That is the idea – not that God is in church but not here. God Is Now Here – in my husband, in my children, in my work, in my servants and my duty is to serve them. Service is the best worship. Think "I am cooking food for an emblem of God".

In many ways you are serving God better than me; I am serving by prayer and meditation, but you are serving by practical work which is better. By prayer I am not giving any material, but you are giving your work, your exertion, money and faith. In that

sense you are much better than me. It is not necessary to renounce family life and the world as long as you do not say “my son, etc.” He is not your son; you cannot change his form or give him life; he is not yours, he is just loaned to you. He is God himself, playing the rôle of son. You are only the custodian. If you can get this attitude, both sides will benefit. Since you are placing God within him then he will attract divine qualities; so both will benefit.

J.R. This is what I meant when I tried to say that one’s situation in life is where one has to work. There is no conflict.

D.S. When the boy is naughty you say, “What a miraculous part in the way of God he is playing!” You have a servant, and you say, “How good of God to come to me in the form of a servant to serve me.” Even a bad servant will not remain bad for long if you do not flinch from this attitude; he will eventually act in a God-like way.

F.R. When you say God, do you mean Param-Atman?

D.S. Yes. (He then went on with his line, with another example):

A rich man who was very fond of his father, after the father’s death had an image made of him in gold, and also had a pair of his father’s shoes copied in gold. After some time he fell on bad times and became very poor. His wife pointed out that they had lots of photographs of his father, and other shoes of his, and that they should sell the gold images. They could replace them when times got better. The man took the gold image and the gold shoes to sell. The merchant weighed them both, added the two weights together and calculated the price at so much per gram. The man selling the gold was furious and called him cheat for offering the same price for the image as for the shoes, but the buyer pointed out that he was not buying the image or the shoes; he was buying gold and they were both the same. So in the worldly life we see many forms, and we distinguish between the father and the shoes, but pure Consciousness is the material throughout. Direct your attention not on the form, but the material contained in them, which is super-Consciousness.

Question from Mexico about how to transfer your sufferings to the Param-Atman:

D.S. There are two ways of doing your duties in the service of Param-Atman: (1) the individual aspect, "I am doing it"; (2) I am not there. Just as others are emblems of God, so am I; therefore Param-Atman is doing Param-Atman's work. Ego is eliminated and you simply become a witness, a witness of the whole show.

F.R. This young man had very great suffering, and nearly died during a big operation on his heart .....

D.S. interrupts and continues –

Images vanish, you become transcendent; you merge yourself in this witness of self, and only witness remains. Now who suffers? Body and mind. Become a witness of your body. Since one identifies mind with the body, the body's suffering touches one. By practice, you can feel exactly the same way about the sufferings of your own body as you do about the suffering of others. Watch the body suffering, just as a dramatic rôle. Let Param-Atman suffer. Once you cross the barrier the force of Param-Atman will come to the body. Param-Atman is free from diseases, and his whole power can descend and can cure you of your disease. It is possible provided your separation is complete. In the same way, if you cannot solve a problem, make yourself absolutely empty and then it will be solved.

Question from Mexico about manifestation of latent abilities.

D.S. Meditation and the remembrance of Param-Atman must go to the place where it will become entirely void; then the abilities will manifest. We gave the answer about the suffering and physical level, but mental level answers are the same. It is the ego covering which prevents manifestation.

F.R. For that you need complete humility and concentration?

D.S. Concentration to the extent that there is no concentration, so that no trace of ego remains. All things centred in one together is meaning of concentration.

Take the heat of the sun: even at 120 or 130 degrees it may burn your skin, but it cannot set light to a bit of paper

Yet with the gentle heat of the winter sun, if it is concentrated through a small piece of glass, it can set light to and burn up the paper.

The force of Param-Atman is spread out – all pervading, but it manifests its full force only if it is concentrated on a particular point, just as you concentrate the sun's rays. It burns the ego when it is concentrated, and then only Param-Atman remains. This is the point of concentrating the mind on a particular point.

Questions from New Zealand:

- 1) Does Dharana – concentration on a particular place, take a man to Self-consciousness?

D.S. The simple answer is Yes. Whether you go by the Way of Devotion, or by the 8-fold Path of Yoga, or by the Way of Knowledge, Dharana is necessary in all three Ways. Dharana means to retain it in a particular place. He thinks of the feet of God, or any part of God, either in his heart or in his head. You concentrate your mind on a particular point until only this point is there. If the mind is allowed to roam everywhere, then it will not be quiet and you will not come to Samadhi.

In the Yoga way it is retained in Chakras. These Chakras are in the spinal cord (but not in the physical sense); they can be seen by the Divine eye. They are retained in plexuses – subtle plexuses by which each of the physical plexuses is energised:

- 1) Behind the coccyx, in the region of the genital organs ..... Noolādhāra
- 2) Near the navel ..... Swādhishthāna
- 3) Near the heart ..... Manipūraka
- 4) Near the thyroid gland ..... Anāhata
- 5) Behind the forehead, near the pineal gland,  
connected with the intellect ..... Vishuddha
- 6) At the back of the head ..... Āgya

(That is why you see people with their head shaved, but a tuft of hair left there. It is supposed to be a very important and delicate part, not to be rubbed too hard, and so the hair is left. It is the seat of the intellect.)

From all these our nerves and energy are controlled.

- 7) The last is called Sahasrāra, which is not included in the six, but contains all the six.

By devotion, Dharana is not a particular object or plexus, because they eliminate by knowledge everything; it becomes void, and they practice Dharana simply on I, and that I is a point. You take a particular point in the void, but void is nothing - nihilism - so who remains? The witness remains. Therefore he places his I on the point of the void, and feels himself there; therefore he goes up and up. If he comes down, he feels himself in everything below.

F.R. Would you describe the chakras as levels of energy or ....

D.S. continues: The experiences and desires which direct the physical plane; as they become more and more subtle they go away.

To fully discuss the Chakras would take a long time, but Dharana can lead to Self-consciousness in this way. It depends on which path you have chosen. Dharana is transformed into Dhyan. In practising it there are interruptions; by constant practice you fix it, and then it is called Dhyan. When that only remains, and even Chitta does not remain, then that is Samadhi; when nothing remains that is Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the ultimate state.

- 2) (New Zealand) – asks about transferring it from head to heart.

D.S. Dharana can also be made outside; when he says ‘everything is God’ that becomes Dharana. Fixing the mind on one point – seeing God in everything – that also is Dharana.

F.R. Mind here in the sense of attention?

D.S. Mind attending to one particular point. At first it requires effort, but then it becomes habit and natural. This Dharana made outside can also lead to Self-consciousness. Effort always gives some sort of worry, but when it is effortless it becomes natural – like the natural feeling you have of existing; you are not all the time worrying about whether you are here or not!

- 3) (New Zealand): about the difference between repeating the Mantra in the mind and remembering.

D.S. I do not understand this question; they are the same. There are three different forms of repetition, but they are first vocal; and with this one you can be saying out loud Om, Om, Om, and thinking of something, quite different.

The first (vocal) one is –

Vaikhari, which is repetition by making sound – vocal Om, Ram, etc.

The second Upanshu; here repetition is with lips but there is no sound;

The third, Manasik – mental repetition.

The second is ten times more forceful than the first, because the mind is completely free to wander while you are making the vocal sound; and the third is a thousand times more forceful than the others, because through making the mind do it, it is not free to wander and disturb you. Make the mind do it, and remain a witness. Become the master of your mind and let it do the work; this is possible by becoming the witness. If you do it with ego you will become the slave or servant, so make the mind obey your wishes and remain the Master of the servant.

F.R. His Holiness has said that the mistress must not run after the maid-servants.

D.S. You should also have aim; if you do not have in mind the inherent quality and object of the meditation, it will only remain words. Meditation should not be aimless.

Take for instance, OM, it consists of three words: Now if you recite OM, A means you have crossed the physical world; then U means you have crossed the mental world; and M – ignorance, the cause of all the sins.

Now you are come to the fourth state which is mySelf; therefore with each repetition the mind should be merged with Self-consciousness. You can do it in one repetition, or you can take a bunch of four repetitions and eliminate the stages one by one.

Thursday, 12 October

After meditation and before the Swami came in, we asked His Holiness if we could put a question to him. He said, “No, it is the Swami’s last day here, so put all your questions to him once more. Tomorrow we shall have opportunity to discuss any differences in the doctrines expressed.”

The Swami then entered with all the unanswered written questions from abroad. Having had opportunity to study the questions and being pressed for time, his replies were short and pithy.

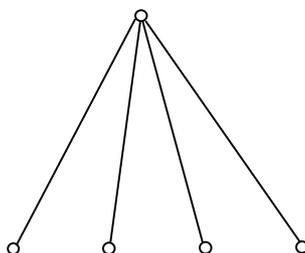
Questions:

London (N.B.): Is there a practical way of bringing the intellect into harmony with the emotion so that one’s energy might be preserved and one might then discover calmly what action is going to be taken without exhausting oneself?

D.S. By surrendering our ego or individual intellect we can at the same time get full activity and power, because then it is Cosmic mind. When you are in the individual plane you cannot think and get the right action; therefore you get exhausted. Now, if you work very hard but are successful, you do not feel exhausted. It is when you are not successful that you get exhausted. Failure is exhausting.

F.R. By intellect, do you mean Buddhi?

D.S. Yes – diagram:



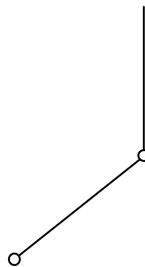
## Pure Consciousness

Inspiration comes from the Cosmic mind; the individual mind has no freedom of action – just as our dream figures have no freedom of action; they are being inspired by the mind of the dreamer. So also the Cosmic mind, or mind of God – or, I should say, Param-Atman plus Maya. Maya has got all the power and energy. The latent power in Param-Atman is manifested through Maya. When He is in Himself, that is a static state; active state begins when He is connected with Maya. So also the individual Self plus ignorance is the individual body.

Diagram:



Consciousness remains the same all the time - it is just the clothing that is different in different stages. Therefore, if you are to discover Him, take away the clothing of the various stages.



This Pure Consciousness at the top is also ourselves at the bottom, but when it is combined with ignorance it becomes Jiva-Atman - individual. When it is combined with Maya it becomes Ishwara Cosmic Mind. Since this is being directed by Maya plus Param-Atman - that means the Cosmic Mind of Intellect – this mind, or Buddhi, is acting under its direction. Now it is limited, now it wants to do the same thing as that, but it cannot; that is why it gets exhausted.

Supposing you have to walk five miles to meet your child, you are exhausted, but when you actually meet your child that

exhaustion goes away. In place of that you have some peace and happiness from the meeting. This is because you achieved your aim.

You cannot have pure Consciousness, bliss and happiness while remaining on the limited plane. So the answer to the question is that, until you surrender to the higher plane and become free from thought yourself, your intellect will always be exhausted because you cannot achieve that thing which you are aspiring for. The only course to conserve energy and do right action is to surrender to God, who is the sustainer, maintainer and destroyer, which is this Cosmic level – Param-Atman plus Maya. Not to Param-Atman itself, but to the qualified Param-Atman. All grace and blessings are from the qualified Param-Atman in the active state.

We think and think because we cannot hit upon the right point of action. There is no need to think if you know. It is because you have doubts that you waste energy thinking. Also the destination is not clear. You will find the right action when you surrender to the Cosmic Mind and allow yourself to be carried on its shoulder so that there will be no effort and no loss of energy. He knows what is happening; we do not know. We give up our responsibility and let Him carry it out. With individual ego we keep trying to change the reel being shown on the cosmic screen; because we are trying to change what is unchangeable we weep. We only have to hear His prompting.

F.R. That is because certain effects have to follow certain causes? They are unchangeable.

D.S. The puppet has to dance; he has no will, and cannot be inactive just because he wants to.

People in Western countries, and even in India, think that to be a recluse means to be inactive. When you appear to be totally inactive, you are in fact doing good to all creatures of the world. People say – that man sitting by himself in a cave is doing no good. But let us take the scientific reason for this. Every word that is uttered reaches every corner of the world, otherwise we could not get the messages by wireless transmitted from China to London. It means the sound is there; the receiver does not create it, nor the transmitter. However, three things are necessary:

1. The transmitter should be good.
2. The receiver must be good and both in working order.
3. Both should be on the same wavelength.

Sound travels like this .... but if I have no receiver I am not getting it. With the receiver on the necessary wavelength, I get it at once. Now each word needs an idea behind it; without any idea no words can be uttered. If you say I, it implies an idea of I. Thought is more subtle than words.

Now people are receivers of peace, tranquillity and happiness. Every mind can be a receiver. When a man has become absolutely silent, thoughtless, and he is in bliss, he is transmitting bliss to all creatures, not only human beings.

Now when you hear in London that Uganda people holding British passports are being killed by General Amin, will not your blood rise up? The word has the power to create a change in you, and by constantly hearing it eventually you will burst out. The idea contained in the word does this. Therefore, if we can make a change by words, we can make a change more subtly by the thought behind words. Therefore, if there are ten such people absolutely inactive and silent, seated in pure Consciousness, then they are transmitting peace and bliss to every corner of the world and will create a great transformation in the world affairs. Also this message is being transmitted constantly. If you are free from thoughts, you will receive this message and be happy and blissful.

You may think these men are not active, but they are active to the highest order. Messages transmitted by me may suit one and not suit another, but the transmission of Bliss will be respected by everyone. This is called ..... By holding meetings or by holding Satsang you may help hundreds or thousands, but there are millions in the world. Who helps them? These men. Although they appear silent and inactive, in fact they are the most vociferous and the most active. The more you go to that silent state, the more good you will do, and the more your energy will be restored.

Then the Swami quoted from Gita about “those who are seated like that .....

New York (E.W.): I have been doing the Meditation for five years but do not seem able to do so, but I will never stop valuing the meditation, for the effects even of the little I do are felt in so many ways. My questions are: (a) Is it possible for the meditation to work in indirect ways though it may seem to be denying itself to one; and (b) Are there other ways of stilling the mind which could lead one closer to the quiet of the meditation?

D.S. Now the word meditation = meditari (Latin) – mēdere (Latin) = to heal. Anything that heals your worries and anxieties is meditation. It is not necessarily sitting quiet. In the course of action, any process which will take your mind away from worry and anxiety will be converted to meditation. It is from the root word to heal. While performing household duties – bathing a child - bathe God; speak to your servant – speak to God; be a witness – all that is meditation in one sense because your mind is concentrated in spite of exterior factors and actions. Your mind is fixed on one thing.

Like the goldsmith buying in gold ornaments, he does not see the ornaments – he only sees the gold and considers the gold in them.

You can do anything providing you are getting health of mind – it must lead to healing; then you are free from worries and thoughts. You could sit quiet for four or ten hours, but if you are not free from anxiety or worry it will not be meditation. You might have to be active for 24 hours – walk for 24 hours – but it can be meditation provided the process which I described yesterday is followed to the letter. (seeing everything as God, and doing everything for God – God in every object and in every action. Param-Atman doing Param-Atman’s work.)

Meditation like this leads to devotion. If you do this sort of meditation while working, it is converted to devotion. Devotion = Dē + Vovēre (from the Latin) = Away + to vow. You take a vow to be away from anything that is not God and to surrender your individual self to God. You therefore take a vow not to think of anything except God.

F.R. Does the word Bhakti carry the same idea?

D.S. Yes. Do not see the image of the ornament – see only the gold; you will see God everywhere. If you see yourself, see God; give yourself away to God.

F.R. Then you will be devout.

D.S. Then you will be devoted.

Lastly, she mentions stilling of the mind. This “stilling” is an obnoxious word; it does not arise. It is not a question of stilling; wipe out this word. Stilling implies suppression, and that will do you no good. It is not stilling, or suppression but sublimation. If you suppress it, it will come up again. If you go to the deep sleep state mind is suppressed, but it does not

recognise pure Consciousness, and it rises up at once again when you awake. It is to sublimate – mind should be lifted up to the Super-mind and to Super-consciousness. Don't try to still the mind by mechanical processes. To think that meditation is stilling of mind is a very wrong idea; you have to go to the seat of all energy – not become inert. Go to the most active.

London (M.A.): Can a person who has been meditating for some years, and values it greatly, be helped in his practice after this time. or does he rely on his own experience to continue and meditate more deeply?

D.S. If the meditation goes to Param-Atman – Maya, you do not require any help. Promptings will come to you. This is the state of the Guru. Pure Consciousness – Self – is the real Guru. Until Self recognizes that he is Guru, he is not Guru to you. Self is selector and selected. If you go to the super-mental state, you will get instruction from within; but if you remain on the individual plane, then you will require help and instruction from others.

London (K.J.): asks about changing teachers, and devoting oneself to one teacher.

D.S. This question does not arise in the case of the spiritual Guru, provided you have surrendered yourself completely to him. By complete surrender you create such a force in the Guru by your faith and surrender, that he will satisfy you. So it does not depend so much on the Guru, but on the disciple himself.

Three questions from Mr. Rabeneck, N.Y.:

1) Referring to Laghu-Vakya-Vritti, 9–11, describing pure Consciousness as shining forth between two modifications of the Intellect. Is that during the inner state (on awakening) between dreaming and waking with the observer present? ....

D.S. On the cinema screen, when the reel is exhausted, another reel may be put on, but what always remains? – the white screen. Without the screen, without the substratum, no reel can be shown. So also, the pure Consciousness remains even after the whole drama is over. Pure Consciousness remains throughout the three levels I showed you – only the clothing may be different, the limitation may be different. At the level of Maya it is the sum total of all ignorance; at individual level it is individual ignorance. There is no difference between inner and outer, because if you try to touch the reel at any part, it will always be the screen which you

Pure Consciousness : 'I' becomes Brahman  
 touch. That is our own home – the Reality – and until we reach our own home there will be no peace.

2) L.V.V. 2 begins: “Ignorance makes the causal adjunct...” would this dissolution of time lead finally to the disappearance of causality and ignorance? Causality seems only possible in time.

D.S. Cause-and-effect depends on time, and time is a function of ignorance. Time means past and future. Pure Consciousness or the white screen is present always; therefore what is present always has no past or future. When you forget this and think over the past and future, then there is cause-and-effect. For the effect to come out of the cause requires time. Cause – effect – time are only offshoots of ignorance. When you have made your mind free from the idea of past and future, you will be established in the present.

3) When His Holiness speaks of everything merging into the Self, does he mean that when all is absorbed into the Self there is no world left nor is there any ignorance – only the Self? Then man in his three states creates, maintains, and dissolves his illusory world like Brahman creates, maintains and absorbs the world we see around us. Is that so?

D.S. No – it is the reverse. Individual can never be Brahman or Param-Atman. It is not by creating, maintaining or dissolving that we are going there ourselves; it is by taking out the power of creation, preservation and dissolution that we become Brahman.

Maya in Cosmic mind is an external factor. You have to become free from ignorance, free from Maya.

Diagram:



Now Pure Consciousness is at each point, so the ‘I’ becomes Brahman by taking away all external things, by eliminating. Any idea of creating, sustaining or dissolving is a limiting factor; they are garbs. You don’t become Brahman by putting on garbs.

At the end the Swami said: You have to get rid of all doubts. Doubts are a hindrance to proper meditation. Doubts must be wiped out because doubts make things complicated, and very long.

If you have a clear road you can drive fast and enjoy driving. If the road is not clear it is not only slow, but tiring to your nerves.

After we had thanked Dandi Swami for all his care in answering our questions, he took his departure.

On the following day (Friday, 13th October) we had one final audience with the Shankaracharya in the presence of his brother and another leading Teacher in his set-up, and this is included (p.72) in the main account.

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19th November:

Reply to R.'s letter of 24th October:

Dandi Swami, after thanking R. for his kind letter and saying that he could not send a prompt reply owing to heavy engagements, wrote as follows:

“Man is only an instrument in the hand of God which the self of all and everybody has, therefore, to play his individual rôle in this eternal drama according to His inexorable Will and promptings. If we remember this truth constantly in mind, we may be free from the most indomitable enemy in our spiritual progress – the Ego, which remains as a dark covering of the Param-Atman (Pure Consciousness) within us so long as it is allowed to act in its own way of ignorance. Therefore, all praise and admiration expressed in your letter must be due to God (the eternal prompter) who prompted this body to answer the questions to your satisfaction.

By nature I like solitude and try to be away from the turmoils of the congregational life, but people – due to love and reverence for me, drag me forcibly to various functions from time to time. I do not feel sorry for it because it is all predestined. After attending the conference of the Mahatmas, of which I was elected as the President, I had to come to Dhampur which is about 700 kilometres from Allahabad to preside over a meeting of the most erudite Sanskrit scholars of India. Both the conferences were a great success. I propose to go back to Allahabad by the end of this month. From the 23rd December to the 31st December 1972 I shall have to preside over a great Vedanta conference at Bihar in which not only the eminent Saints of India, but also the reputed scholars from other parts of the world are likely to participate.

During January to February 1973 I shall stay at Allahabad. My programme from March onwards is rather uncertain. In any case, you may write to me at any time you like on spiritual questions of technical or non-technical nature and I shall try to satisfy you on those points with the best of my ability. It may be that while I am on tour there may be some delay in sending reply to your question for obvious reasons .....

(D.S. then said that letters should be sent to him c/o the Shankaracharya's Ashram at Allahabad, and that they would be forwarded to him unopened if he was away on tour.)

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At the beginning of 1973 by letter addressed directly to Dandi Swami at the Ashram, R. asked him a question about posture during meditation. Here is his careful hand-written reply (15th February 1973):

The sitting posture should be steady and comfortable with the legs interlocked on a firm ground so that there may not be any possibility of falling down when the meditation is deep and the consciousness of the physical body is lost. Sitting on chairs or raised platforms is, therefore, prohibited. If you sit squatting on a thick cushion on the ground (which has already been cleaned nicely and made pleasant to the eyes and mind by proper arrangements) with the legs interlocked and practise this for a certain length of time, regularly at least twice day, you will not feel that sort of “floating in and out” movement because by long-continued practice the sitting posture will become not only steady but also comfortable. Steadiness does not mean merely the capacity to remain more or less in the same position with freedom to make minor movements and adjustments from time to time, but it means a certain degree of immovability which practically amounts to fixing the body in one position and eliminating all movements of any kind. In trying to maintain this immovable position the beginner is apt to introduce a certain amount of rigidity which makes the body tense. This is definitely wrong because it is likely to react adversely on the health of the body. What should be aimed at is the ideal combination of immovability with relaxation. It is possible only then to forget the body altogether (which is most essential to merge oneself into deep meditation or Samadhi, as it is called). The three Asānas (sitting postures) which are generally practised in our country in the initial stage of ‘Dhyāna’ are (a) Padmāsana, (b) Siddhāsana and (c) Swastikasana (although there are numerous other Asānas which are practised by them to keep the body fit and free from diseases which are bound to have reactions on mental equilibrium). Sitting in any Asāna becomes uncomfortable in the initial stage and the beginner will find that he cannot maintain it for any considerable time without feeling minor discomforts in various parts of the body. If, however, Asāna is correctly chosen and practised in the right way, this steady and persistent practice will gradually eliminate all these minor discomforts which

cause constant distractions to the mind. The yogi is then able to maintain his body in the correct posture indefinitely and to forget the physical body altogether. If, in spite of prolonged practice and good health, one feels discomfort in the posture for long periods there is then something wrong either with one's choice of the proper Asana (suitable for one's particular constitution) or method of practising it, and it is advisable in that event to seek expert advice in this matter.

There are other advantages of the Asānas (sitting postures as well as other movements of the body) as suggested by the Indian Yoga Sastras. Many of these Asānas, by affecting the endocrine glands and Prānic (vital) currents, tend to bring about very marked changes in the body and, if practised correctly and for a sufficiently long time, promote health in a remarkable manner. These Asānas are based on the principle that changes in consciousness can be brought about by setting in motion currents of certain kinds of subtler forces (Prāna, Kundalini) in the physical body. In the Indian Yoga system the first step in contacting the deeper levels of consciousness is, therefore, to make the physical body perfectly healthy (by Asānas, Brahmacharya and observance of certain other most essential moral principles) and thus become fit for the influx and manipulation of these forces. There is no denying the fact that the most important method adopted for bringing about changes in consciousness is based essentially on the control of the mind by the Will and gradual elimination of Chitta-Vrttis (modifications of the mind). The technique of meditation (Dhyāna) is, therefore, mainly directed towards the elimination of all sources of disturbance to the mind, whether these sources are external or internal. But one of the important sources of disturbance to the mind is the physical body. Even modern Psychology recognises the close connection between the mind and the body and their mutual actions and reactions on each other all the time. So the yogi [that is, any person inclined to have yoga (complete union) with the Infinite Consciousness] must try his best to eliminate completely the disturbances which arise from the physical body before he tries to tackle

the problem of the mind itself. (In fact, both these practices are continued simultaneously). This is achieved through the practice of proper Asānas by which the physical body can be kept fixed in one particular posture. It is found that when it (the physical body) can be kept like this for a long time, it ceases to be a source of disturbance to the mind.

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12th November (D)

On hearing a translation of Reading 3 (23rd October 1972) – which included extracts from meetings here and with the Swami in Allahabad – His Holiness made the following comments:

- (a) Q. (St. John White): Is this ‘paying’ to do with returning something that is given you? This ‘sense of returning’ can be developed especially in creative arts. The compulsion to work is tied in with an unusual feeling of having to give back. In life one is in a situation where one has to give. I have 100 students, which I find difficult – but if one avoided it that would be some kind of rejection instead of an opportunity.

.....

And a little later P.F. remarked that (when things go wrong inside the School here, and sometimes outside), “it is frequently a question of who is doing it.”

- 1) H.H. very much liked the remarks by St. John White and P.F.’s question that “When things go wrong ... who is doing it?” He observed that our past Samskar (accumulated nature) and the six inner enemies, i.e., Kama (obsessive desires), Krodha (anger), Lobh (greed), Madh (vanity), etc., make things go wrong. Blame should not be thrown on God, thinking that He motivated everything that happened. As explained in Gita, Kama creates a lot of Rajoguna which, in turn, does so much mischief.

(b) Part of conversation with Swami – 7th October 1972:

R.A. We are trying to go by the way of the householder.

Swami: You can be doing many different things, but you can offer them to God (Param-Atman). Like the sacrificial pyre which is burnt as an offering to God, you offer each action to Param-Atman .... Therefore, the worship of God should not be in a closed room only – it should be while you are in action, eating, drinking, speaking, walking. You learn to say, “It is not my acting, drinking, etc., I am only the instrument.” We are like puppets; we recognise that we have to play a rôle. Think of the money the audience pays to watch the puppet show. Does it go to the puppets? Do they get the profits? No, it goes to the one who controls them .... This is called ‘worship by work’; you should not sit around and be idle .... Further, some puppets have to act saints and some ruffians. They each play a rôle. This should be our attitude (not sitting in judgement on, or imitating other people).

2) H.H. “Worship of God should not be in a closed room only ....”

It should be clearly understood that this does not in any way condemn worship in a closed room. On the other hand, it is necessary. Only it should be supplemented in all actions as indicated by the Swami Ji, and not forgotten after coming out of the room.

3) The simile of the puppet should not be taken too literally, because if we were really so then Self-realization would have become an impossibility. We have got an Atman, the very substance of Param-Atman, which the puppet has not got.

Swami (contd.): Your actions and thoughts can be your means of worship. You need not offer flowers, you can offer your actions and thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent. He (Param-Atman) is the fount of all actions, and every act must go back to Him. When linen is put in the fire, every bit is burnt whether it is soiled or clean, whether it was king’s, a queen’s, or a crossing-sweeper’s. You just have to have one aim and attention on a particular goal. The difficulties come from lack of determination. Just have faith that, according to His Will, everything is being done. The fire does not refuse to burn the dirty linen – it burns all.

So you just offer up all your actions whether they have been good or bad. You have to sacrifice only your limited consciousness.

- 4) “You can offer your actions and thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent.”

H.H. is emphatic that only good actions should be offered to God, and as regards bad actions, we must always regret them and pray to Him to be forgiven for them. Param-Atman is not the fount of any bad actions. His actions are good and orderly and this is why an order prevails in the universe. If He could ever initiate a wrong action, the cosmos would immediately lapse into chaos.

Wrong actions originate as explained under (1) above. We must, however, bear in mind that the very same action can be good in one situation and bad in another.

- 5) “The fire does not refuse to burn dirty linen.”

H.H. True, but the question hardly arises as soiled clothes are just sent to the laundry. We do not take the trouble of consigning them to fire!

The conversation with the Swami continued:

R.A. Would you say that we can only get Self-realization through renunciation?

Swami: You have to sacrifice the past to the present, and the future to the present – the Omnipresent Param-Atman. Renunciation and sacrifice are two different things – renunciation means ‘giving up’ and contains an element of ego. But sacrifice is an act of worship (from a Latin word which means ‘making holy’).

Swami contd.:

God created East and West, but if He had combined the two – passiveness of the East and the activity of the West – then everybody would have experienced super-Consciousness. (laughs) But in this lies the drama, that He has made us inactive and made you very active indeed!

R.A. Of course a lot of people work not for fame, etc. but simply to keep alive.

Swami: There are good, bad and indifferent ways of living, some people never aspire, and that is an indifferent way of life. You should always work for perfection; doing good actions is not just passing the time. Good actions must be done to make life perfect so that we will be free of further cares. As long as desire is there, we will not be free, and just an inch below perfection there lurk some desires.

M.A. Do you mean that whatever you are given to do, you should do it to the best of your ability? – for the sake of God?

Swami: Yes, with the thought that God has given me this rôle to play.

J.R. And this is our life – the rôle we are given is our field of work?

Swami: Yes. We should try to play our rôle very nicely, and with the greatest regard to God .... The sweeper can fill his basket and offer it to God just as well as a basket of flowers. Our rôle in the drama is prompted from the same script and by the same director – no work is bad and no work is good so long as the director is the same .... The soldier's rôle is to kill. If he says, 'I will not kill because non-violence is the greatest virtue,' he will not be playing the rôle in the way it should be played – as Lord Krishna reminded Arjuna in the Gita.

6) H.H. “The sweeper can fill his basket and offer it to God .... as a basket of flowers.”

In actual practice, it is most difficult not to discriminate between a basket of rubbish and flowers as an offering to God. Everything about God is clean and beautiful. Therefore, offering Him

anything unclean and ugly would appear contrary to the spirit of worship. That is why it is traditional to offer flowers.

7) “The soldier’s rôle is to kill ....”

But a hunter cannot treat killing as his rôle. We have to be most cautious in seeking exceptions to the general rule that non-violence is the greatest virtue. It is true that Krishna advised Arjuna to fight. But it was done when an enemy was standing in front ready to launch an attack, rejecting all attempts for a peaceful settlement.

(c) Part of conversation with Swami – 12th October:

Swami: You will find the right action when you surrender to the cosmic Mind and allow yourself to be carried on those shoulders. Then there would be no effort and no waste of energy. With individual ego we keep trying to change the film shown on the cosmic screen; and because we are trying to change the unchangeable, we are miserable.

F.R. Is it because certain effects are bound to follow certain causes that the film is unchangeable?

Swami: The puppet has to dance – he has no will of his own and cannot be inactive just because he wants to be.

8) H.H. ‘Trying to change the film shown on the cosmic screen’.

We need not do this at all, as the cosmic screen is constantly showing a multitude of various films, and we can always select a film which we can like. Just as a large number of cinema houses in the town screen various films and we only go to that one which shows the film of our own choice – instead of trying to change the film on show at a particular house.

. . . . .

Letter continued:

“H.H. liked your concluding remarks” (to Reading 3), which were:

‘If we steadily carry further in this way the idea of His Holiness’ quotation from Vyasa in our Programme: “The gist of all the Scriptures is to keep the Param-Atman in memory all the time;” then the feeling it engenders will not evaporate to the dryness of empty words.

The above conversation brings out what “Self-remembering” would really mean. . .  
...”

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