

Monday 18 October

Extract from letter from R.A. to M.A.

I had a long but quite pleasant journey. The plane was not very full and I had three seats to myself all the way. It was a ridiculous route—far south to Cairo, north to Teheran, south to Bombay and north to Delhi.

I spent our transit time in Cairo with a pleasant young Indian who would not give up till he had learnt the purpose of my journey. This innocent inquisitiveness is one of the more endearing qualities of Indians. Eventually we settled that I was a philosopher studying Indian philosophy. We had dinner between Cairo and Teheran, and I had a small bottle of champagne before dinner. I was reading the book D.C. gave us. Parts of it are quite funny. One of the funnier passages made me chortle loudly and I looked up to see my Indian friend on the way to the lavatory. The sight of me giggling and drinking champagne clearly made him think ‘some philosopher’! However, he can’t have lost all faith for he was very helpful later.

The steward and some other passengers warned me that if we landed at Delhi by 6 a.m. at the latest, I might catch my train. Customs, etc., at Delhi are notoriously slow, taking up to an hour and a half, and then it would take an hour to get to the station. In fact I did not leave the aeroplane till 7.45, I was in a taxi by 7.50 and in my train seat at 8.34. The train was underway when my porter got out! Somehow everyone from the health inspectors, the currency inspectors, the customs officers entered into the spirit of the thing. No V.I.P. ever had a quicker passage through the airport. I was rushed to the top of the queue for changing money, and someone found a hire-car that was awaiting an Air India flight which was delayed. Jehu was the driver.

The train was superb. Built at the height of the Raj but now air-conditioned, one travels in modern Imperial splendour. The whole of Central India being one vast plain, there are no contours, so British engineers had simply to build the railway in an absolutely straight line from station to station. They wisely used a wide gauge so the ride is comfortable and fast—better than anything in America.

I was met at the station by Dr. R. and J. Both very well and the Dr. delighted to get the letters I brought. Hotel adequate, food awful, climate good.

R.A.’s Introduction

The Ashram is less grand than I had expected. It is quite a big building not unlike a small barracks. The entrance is through a central archway where stand formidable though antiquated iron gates. Dr. R. showed me into the courtyard and pointed out the temple facing the entrance and the residential block on the left. The lower half of the main block is apparently a school. One enters the meeting room from a stairway in the archway. There is a large verandah cloister which runs the length of the room, and very soon after we entered from one door, the Shankaracharya came in from the other. It was ten minutes to five, and we weren’t supposed to be there till 5 o’clock. The meeting room is white, and about 80’ x 25’. The cloister mentioned is on the right, and there is a small quarter cloister on the left. All round, at about 7’ high runs a picture rail. Supported on it, rather than hung from it, are a great many pictures. Dr. R. was explaining to me that the picture behind the throne was of Guru Deva with the Shankaracharya near, and the Maharishi also there, when we heard the chant indicating that the S. was arriving. He went straight to the throne which is on a dais at the end of the room furthest from the archway. The throne appears to be of more modern design than I expected. It is of silver gilt I suppose, and stands on a large tiger skin. A small skin covers the seat where the S. sits cross-legged. When he came in he gave me three or four very surprising smiles of welcome, and allowed me to catch his eyes on several occasions—a thing he hardly ever did last time. I was not conscious of the very strange boring look by which he can see to one’s depth, but I expect he used it. An attendant kept up quite a long chant after the S. was seated. We all stood.

I kept looking at the S. and he gave me sort of encouraging glances. I got the feeling that I was re-meeting him on quite a different plane. There seemed to be a sort of contact above our bodies and all round. It was as though he were saying, “Here we are, it is nice to see you—these formalities have to be gone through”. Chant over, we sat down and I began to meditate at once. Almost immediately the S. started that humming which is the prelude to meditation. Very often in meditation I get or rather the Mantra gets to a place just above my head. This time it got there with what seemed tremendous sweeps of eagles’ wings. Apart from that, there was little remarkable about what was, I suppose, a meditation of ten minutes or so. After this J. said my opening piece. The S. did not react at all to this, except for a gentle smile, so I launched into my question:

R.A. There is a strong feeling in London of the need at this time to build a bridge between East and West. Does the S. agree, and if so can he recommend any action?

H.H. Everyone needs true knowledge and indeed it is their birthright, to which they are entitled if they desire it. Yes, the establishment of a connection or bridge is a good thing. After all, it is the same Atman that we all seek. Spiritual knowledge has certainly been sustained in India, but is not limited to India. Everyone, everywhere has the same right to it. The kind of bridge we are talking about is based on good-will, it is an emotional bridge. Once you have established relations, it is possible to see how things grow and develop. When this is seen, and carried through, then it would be possible to extend it. The world over people are looking for happiness, that aim lies behind all the activities in the world. Those who have found the way have come to that peace. They would then be able to show it to others and perhaps give a lead.

R.A. When the S. talks of knowledge sustained in India, does he refer to the great writings like Upanishads, Vedanta, Bhagavad Gita, or to the Meditation?

H.H. Knowledge mentioned does not belong only to either the books referred to, nor to the Meditation, but to both. For instance, the Upanishads deal with the Atman through knowledge, Buddhi. The experience of that Atman is achieved only through meditation. All people throughout the tradition known to India for a long time. Some with earnest desire and complete frankness have looked into the matter and found the essence of everything which is the Atman. They have realised it in their own being through Meditation. This tradition has been preserved in India for milleniums and so it will continue in the future. As for the rest of the world, the search has undoubtedly gone on everywhere, but either they did not go into things closely enough, or else nothing is known of the result of their researches. The West has made many discoveries and inventions, but it seems that it has far to go to reach peace, the most desirable of all. Through this tradition one can attain that peace which is not available elsewhere. S. does not see the world in terms of East and West, but rather in terms of humanity—mankind. His tradition has had a long journey. During it, certain people could only go a certain way and stopped. They disgraced themselves and the tradition. Still, the tradition is always on the move. One can trace in history, or one can discover for oneself how those who have carried on this tradition with sincerity have stood, not for a part, but for the whole of mankind. All who desire to find peace inside must see whether their desire is true or whether some things in the material world please them too much. If the latter, their minds will be changing all the time. If the pursuit of this knowledge is only for momentary pleasure, then there will be no results. If desire is intense and pure, something is bound to happen. In this case some may go a long way, others not so far, and success may not be achieved in this life. This is no cause for despondency or frustration for the influences gathered and the efforts used in the search will bear fruit in the future. In the situation of to-day, the bridge we have in mind is the emotional one. Some people will get peace through following the way themselves, others can then get it through them.

R.A. The S. is saying we must build this bridge by example. While hoping he will help us with our example, it is going to be a long job. Can he do anything quicker?

H.H. Time factor is part of material world. Where there is space there is time. For instance, a long journey takes much time, a short journey less, but in the spiritual world time and space have no validity. One can't think of time in relation to Self-realisation. The Atman which is to be realised is here, there and everywhere. No-one has to journey to find it. It is found only in oneself. One factor which may have a bearing on time is the intensity of desire and the process of cleansing and purification going through the disciple. Two disciples of the same calibre, going by the same system and formula may not achieve Self-realisation at the same time, or neither may achieve it at all. This is a matter for the Inner World, but as the process of purification and cleansing shows itself, Self-realisation seems to be nearer.

R. The last few days I have found great help in practice from your words "Buddhi must be stilled." This is achieved now during meditation and is so also when I wake at night. But any mental activity sets it moving again, and it takes time once more to still it. How to keep it quieter?

H.H. We want to still Buddhi because Buddhi is in motion. Of course it is in motion because every activity is basically Rajas. Whenever you have activity Buddhi will have to work and so move. When in meditation Buddhi is still, that is fine. Nothing wrong. What one needs is to see (to become Observer) that one has to activate Buddhi for certain work but when not required one stills it. You can enjoy Buddhi either still in meditation or properly active in work. Meditation has three qualities, its use can be described in three ways. First nourishment, second cleansing, third healing. We need food every six hours to keep the body going, a bath every 24 hours to keep it clean, medicine every so often if ill —if homeopathic every seven days! As body needs these things, so whole system needs this service, except Atman which in fact does not need anything, being complete in itself. But activities of Rajas and Tamas collect impurities. Meditation cleans them out. If no impurities no need for meditation. Meditation is not an end in itself. Bliss is the ultimate end. It is the nature of the Atman to be blissful, but Rajas and Tamas deprive it of bliss. Meditation cleans out everything so that Atman reaches its natural state of bliss.

R. I feel sorry that I get pulled away from Atman. I would like to do things more from my centre.

H.H. If you feel you are removed from the centre, that is the most important thing. This is the strength of Sattva. To be active in the world is no bad thing, for this is your destiny. For example, if someone works hard in the heat of the sun he is doubly appreciative of the shade of the tree. If you are very busy in your ordinary life, go on doing it, but the moment you come back to meditation, the pleasure and peace will be specially deep. All who want to give this peace to others have a special responsibility. They must not withdraw from the active world. If they did, people would think that they are trying to escape from the active world. That is not what the meditation is for. Go into activity, exert yourself, exhaust yourself if need be, but keep alive the thread leading to Sattva which calls on you to come back home to meditate and get the energy for next time.

R.A. The energy accumulated during morning meditation dissipates too easily with the tasks of the day. How can it be more surely stored?

H.H. If one feels necessity one can increase half hour of meditation and decrease activity. This is folly, however, Meditation unites one with eternal resources. If you earn 100 rupees and only spend 75 you save 25 rupees. If you possess unlimited treasure where do you stand? You own everything there is. Strength of Atman is greatest of all, for everything rests on it. In proper meditation one should get enough to keep one going 20 or 30 hours. If one is exhausted after 8 hours, one should check that meditation is right. Two half hours of good meditation provide quite enough energy for all our needs.

R. Doing one's duty is no problem, but one gets up to a lot of mischief and uses energy on useless work and useless pleasure.

H.H. All work that is useful to Atman is all right—go ahead with it. Some work which is useless to the Atman may be dictated by attachment, other by time, place and situation or circumstances. Provided you know that this is useless work you are safe. You are observing not doing it intentionally, not identified. You may be forced by circumstances to do these things, so provided you know what is happening you need not worry. For example, no one likes to be sick, but sometimes we do get sick for reasons outside our control. Medicine cures the sickness but one does not dwell on it, one enjoys the freedom of good health. As long as one keeps coming back to useful work, one is all right. In fact one is fortunate, for common people do not know what they are doing whether it is useful or not.

Tuesday 19 October

After about twenty minutes' meditation:

R.A. I know and understand that Atman is universal self, and this affects my life. I do not fully experience this in meditation, though I often seem on the brink. What stops me there?

H.H. In everyone's life one does experience unity with the Atman but one does not know it. During deep sleep the self merges with the Universal self. This happens in ignorance but is a natural phenomenon. If during active life or meditation one does not feel this merging, it is because of a sheath. This sheath is natural too. The unity which is experienced is the light thrown by the Atman on this sheath, and recognised by the Antahkaran. If the sheath is transparent and pure, then all is well, but if it is cloudy or dirty, one only gets a glimmer. This is the brink of direct experience. If the water in the Ganges were Universal Atman, then water taken from the Ganges and put into a bottle would be the individualised self, although the water is the same. Once you open or break the bottle letting the water flow back into the Ganges you would no longer see any difference, and you would not be able to take the water back, for it will have merged with the Ganges again and for ever. The only thing which has made it different is the sheath. So Antahkaran separates the individual Atman from the Universal Atman.

R.A. What is the purpose of the bottle?

H.H. The Creator created the Universe in all its different aspects and forms. He observes the Drama which he has created. All who take part in this play and know its mystery and essence are detached. They play their part and enjoy it. Those who do not know its mystery become identified with their parts and are bound by them. When they lose their identification they too can enjoy playing their part in the Grand Drama without being bound.

There was a man from the country who visited his city relatives. To entertain him, the relatives took him to the cinema. They bought expensive tickets for the back row, but their country cousin was insulted at being put at the back. He insisted that they sit in the very front. All went well until suddenly a lion appeared on the screen and looked as if it would jump at the audience. Our friend took his stick and struck at the lion to defend himself. The screen was broken, the film stopped and the place thrown into darkness and confusion. At first no one could understand what had happened; then they realised that in the audience was a man who had never been to a cinema before and took the film to be real.

The same applies to those ignorant people who regard what goes on in the world as real and become identified and involved leading to foolish actions; when the real significance of the Grand Drama is known these people can play their part with detachment from themselves and enjoyment.

Dr. R. Tells the story of the grateful elephant who lifts from the humble to the expensive seats the man who earlier had removed a thorn from his foot.

H.H. Replies that scientific examination has shown that elephants have good intelligence and sharp memories. It is also supposed to be faithful in service to its master.

R.A. Going back to the Ganges: when a man becomes fully realised, is his bottle emptied back into the river?

H.H. This example relates to a physical form and we think of these forms with ignorance. When ignorance is gone one can see through forms to reality. Similarly when considering the relation of the Atman to the Universal Atman, body is the illusion, and it should not be allowed to separate the real unity which exists.

R. A question about Antahkaran: how does this relate to the development of the two higher bodies? Do the properties which H.H. mentioned when telling about the projections of the mind to Badrinath, change?

H.H. The example of experiencing the Deity in the temple from a distance is possible in Samadhi. There are two types of Samadhi. One is without desire, the other contains desire and experience. This experience is based on the emotional centre which in turn depends upon which Guna predominates. Our coarse body is regulated by three types—1st built of clay, 2nd built of steel, 3rd built of glass. Clay is opaque but breaks easily so that the inner and outer can experience each other. The steel body is opaque and hard to break so communication between inside and outside is difficult. The glass body can be seen in and out at the same time. These bodies can be compared as follows. Glass is Sattva, clay is Rajas, steel Tamas. If one has a glass body such experiences as have been described are easy. But one should not take manifestations as real experience, they are only on the fringe of reality. An experience of this order is based on previous personal knowledge gained through the eyes, or other senses, and in this Manas acts as second eye. It has a quality which permits looking even without light or the help of the physical eye. [*Clairvoyance*]

R.A. May I return to the Great Drama of the Creator. Are there any rôles which are particularly difficult to play, and if they are played with detachment do the actors get a special reward?

H.H. This play is a pleasant play—there are no difficult parts. Difficulties are when actors take the play to be real through ignorance. Then even ordinary acts become big and terrifying and cause fright and pain. If the act is pleasurable then these ignorant actors become infatuated by the pleasure.

R. What about people like Genghis Khan?

H.H. On the Sattvic way there are always some people somewhere in the world to keep the tradition going. In certain cases men are destined to take the rôle of leader. These men have authority to correct the phase through which the world is passing. These people are rare and they act through Rajas. Though their actions appear in Rajas, one must remember that these special people are sent to do precisely this work.

R.A. The Shankaracharya no doubt appreciates that I am really after the answer to a question so often asked in the West which is, Why does God allow poverty and suffering and cruelty?

H.H. After all, what is misery? Give someone one suit of clothing or a hundred, will they be satisfied? Will they not hanker for different or better ones? Happiness and misery are not caused by lack of food or clothing. They are both a product of the mind. As long as one allows oneself to be identified one can be miserable without food or with plenty of food. Who really knows that the poor, the weak, or the unsheltered are living in misery? Equally, who knows the rich are happy? As often as not they lack the zest to enjoy things they buy, or can't digest their food, or lack health to enjoy natural surroundings.

One should not judge the condition of the Atman by poverty or sickness. One should look always to the cause—what brings misery? It may be covered in silk or it may be naked. Nor should one conclude that death

is the ultimate answer for the relief of misery. Release from misery comes from true knowledge which takes no account of riches or poverty, sickness or health.

Discrimination is the key. Through it one can see one's own desires for things one lacks, and one can also see that those who have the things one covets are not happy. Neither happiness nor misery dwell in things, but in one's own decision, made through discrimination, that acquisition of worldly things will bring neither. Following that decision detachment comes, releasing from misery and bringing happiness.

R. The word discrimination appears intellectual; should it not be understanding, which combines intellect and emotion?

H.H. Truth is only experienced when emotional and intellectual centres join. Alone, intellect is dry. Real knowledge comes from unity of intellect and emotion.

R. In London it is often asked whether the Mantra remains with us in the next life? Supposing we don't escape from the wheel of life in this life and have to return, is the Mantra still there?

H.H. This is a defeatist attitude. There is no rule that people will have realisation in the next life or after that. But why consider that? Why not this life? This is the great opportunity. Seize it.

Try to realise yourself now, don't look beyond, it is unnecessary. A question like this means that we just want a sample without the full experience. There is no need to postpone. There is no law of the Creator that people can't have realisation in this life, so don't think about the next!

Wednesday 20 October—Morning

This was the first morning meeting in Allahabad. Only one woman beside the small entourage was present. After half-an-hour's meditation the Shankaracharya said:

H.H. Natural state of the Atman is peace and bliss. From this grew desire and so creation began with action and expansion. Action and desire form the two poles between which Creation rises and falls, so that the eternal peace can be manifest in different ways. There is a new Drama every time one is completed. Those actors who are detached play their parts in peace; those who are identified experience suffering. The spiritual exercises which have been given and which we now discuss are for those who take the Drama for real. They offer a way of escape from the bondage of the parts through detachment. With the first act of creation the Absolute provided for those who would become identified and who went against the natural way. He provided this system so that they could recover detachment. This system is therefore not man-made.

The appeal of freedom is universal to those in bondage but there are two kinds of freedom—transitory and absolute. The servant is naturally pleased at the end of his working day and is in a better state than when at work. Children are jubilant when they rush from school. A particular school had to close for a week because the teacher had malaria. After a week he was still not fit so the children were given another three days off. On hearing this news one child remarked how wonderful it would be if the teacher died and we could have a holiday for ever.

This indicates the two type of freedom. Everyone wants some freedom from bondage. The freedom given by the Shastras [*Traditional codes of laws*] is one which lets a man work yet be free. This is available to those who have fallen from the natural path of freedom.

R. Does the Shastra provide all knowledge necessary to live?

H.H. Yes, but there are two types of Shastra. One type points the direction and orders what should be done. The other type offers counsel only and never demands or commands.

R. Does it help a man to take an interest in and know about the great world of the stars and the little world within himself?

H.H. Knowledge of the higher and inner worlds is necessary, for by knowing the laws of those worlds one can escape from them. Knowledge of this kind is always good but one should be careful that it is complete. A little knowledge is dangerous. Nearly all the mistakes made are through limited knowledge. Some don't need knowledge for they go by the emotional way. Someone can tell them about this and off they go. They do not need to acquire this knowledge by themselves as do those who follow the path of knowledge.

R. Which Shastra do emotional people use?

H.H. The second. Men on the emotional path work through the heart, not the body. The first Shastra has sets of rules requiring hard and rigorous discipline which seeks to perfect the body and so through that perfection to reach the inner world. The Atman of course supervises this. The second Shastra works differently—here the body rests quietly and the inner self turns towards stillness and peace. Here the inner influences the outer instead of the other way round, and if the Buddhi is still, the condition of the body is not important. The first way, moreover, is impossible for those whose body is poor.

R.A. Asked about the difference between Atman and Absolute. It was cleared up with Jaiswal's subsequent help that Atman means individualised self—i.e. the bottle of Ganges water, and Param-Atman means Universal Self, i.e. the river Ganges.

H.H. Nothing is excluded from the Absolute. In the act of creation by the Absolute, all is manifested. Take a pot of clay. The clay is there before the pot is created and the clay will remain after the pot is broken. The Absolute is, before and after creation. All human beings are the same basically; they all have Atman, Buddhi, Manas. Some individuals, however, acquire special qualifications relating to their work—engineers, philosophers, doctors, but they are still all men. So it is with Atman. Twenty-five years ago Indian ghee was produced only from cow's milk. Technology then made possible a vegetable ghee. So there were two types of ghee. The vegetable ghee was cheaper, so some people mixed the two types and sold it at the higher price to make a profit. To stop this, shops now carry signs saying that only pure ghee is sold there. In fact of course ghee must always be pure or it is not ghee. There is no need therefore to have notices referring to pure ghee. It is only because of confusion that two names are used. The same with Atman and Param-Atman. If there were no confusion, two names would not be needed. As it is, they should only be used for training, for when understanding is reached they can be dispensed with.

Wednesday 20 October—Evening

R. Does His Holiness remember the lady whose questions from England when in despair, he answered in Lucknow, advising to get her Manas occupied with useful work, and telling story of servant and bamboo pole? She has carried out his instructions and became quite well again; in fact, for several months she has been getting experiences of bliss from meditation. She asks me to thank you and puts this question:

“When blissful I feel a consciousness above my head. When I am ‘up there’ consciousness feels all over and everywhere. Should one be repeating Mantra when above? The Mantra wants to go up there just after meditation and seems only to want to be above the head. I get no unpleasant reactions, but am I holding on to the meditation too much?”

H.H. Consciousness prevails everywhere. There is no place without it. When in the course of self-development one meditates, the three forces of the Mantra go upwards. These forces are, as you have been told Peace, Light and Fire. The fire burns impurities, the light illumines truth, the peace carries to bliss. In its physical manifestation, fire goes upwards though sometimes the wind may blow it sideways. In the body the three forces are carried by Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. They start from the pelvis and when attention is concentrated on the Mantra they rise up through the spine. Ida works on the right side of the body, Pingala on the left. These two are always functioning. Sushumna works through the centre of the body (the main plexuses) but operates only when one is still. Then all three forces rise and unite at the centre of the forehead. There extra energy is created and assimilated.

J. Asked about the mythological aspect of this, with special reference to the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, making this a special place.

H.H. This could be taken as symbolic of the three forces working in Allahabad, and Benares—which is the most holy city where the Lord Shiva lives—could be taken as the forehead.

R.A. Some people in London who have difficulty in repeating the Mantra have heard that it may be held visibly in the mind. Should this be done in the form of a symbol or in the form of the word? If the latter, should the word be seen in Roman or Sanskrit letters?

H.H. This should only be done in rare cases where it has proved really impossible for the word to be repeated. If however the visual method is to be used, he prefers the use of Hindi. This is because in English (Roman) it seems to be broken into three, whereas in Hindi it is all one, and so more unified.

R. This has been tried, but is only successful initially and temporarily. It does not seem to last.

H.H. It should not be done much or regularly. One should look, close the eyes, hold in the mind, and try to perceive. This enables one to turn inwards, which is the object. If this method is used instead of repetition the Mantra becomes stuck in the visible form only, which is no good.

R.A. Can disciples help each other? For instance, can one disciple give peace to another or draw him on in his meditation?

H.H. Those who have peace can give peace. Those who meditate well can help those who don't. On the other hand those who are not expert can do more harm than good by trying to help in these ways.

R.A. Seekers after Truth follow different traditions in different parts of the world. It has been said that the essence of all these traditions lies in Sanatan. Will the S. say something about this with particular reference to Western Christian traditions?

H.H. Human beings everywhere are the same and so they have common desires and aspirations. One of the most universal of these aspirations is happiness. All religions everywhere have as their aim the achievement of happiness or bliss. The differences in religions are not to be found in their aim but in their rituals. These rituals have different forms and characters according to the geographical place and historical time of their origin. If one looks behind these rituals one can see that the fundamental spiritual activities of man are practically the same everywhere. If one recognises and overlooks the physical differences of the rituals one can see that the essence of the religions is practically the same also.

R.A. Can we, through what we have learnt from you, be of any help to our tradition?

H.H. There are examples in India of rituals being built up round Sanatan. These have practically no relation to real Sanatan and are hardly concerned with it. This camouflage, this cover makes it very difficult to get to the centre of things. The trouble is that through the ages rituals become bonds. Still, one can try to break through those bonds and get to reality, though whether it would be possible for this to be done in the West we in India do not know.

R. We in London are not based on a Western tradition. Would we have more influence were we to try to graft on to one?

H.H. There are two types of tradition—the general and the special. The first is broadly the same everywhere and consists of the pursuit of Truth, happiness and peace. An example of the special tradition is the Brahmin, Kashatrya and Vaisya. Here the ritual of the three castes exists and is unbreakable. Likewise there must be special traditions in the West developed according to time and place. The best thing would be if we could go from these special traditions to the general. It is there that real unity is possible. The difficulty is that these traditions are very deep-rooted. The one thing that can be done is to intensify effort so that there is more light amongst your people so that others in the West may be enlightened.

R.A. We are of course primarily interested in your personal wisdom, but we would like to know something of your official position as Shankaracharya.

H.H. Whenever enough people move away from the path of Truth, certain beings come to give knowledge which will bring them back to the Truth, to bliss. 2,500 years ago the first Shankaracharya was one such being. He lived to be 30 and preached the Truth all over India. He set up four seats and chose four of his disciples to occupy them. There were to be two activities. The first was to spread general knowledge to the people, the second was to keep the special tradition going. When there was no one of sufficient being available, the seat was not to be filled. The seat of the North was vacant for 150 years, till it was occupied by Guru Deva. Out of his 43 disciples Guru Deva nominated the present Shankaracharya, Guru Jagad, to be his successor. Guru Deva died six months later.

R. We would be specially interested to hear anything the Shankaracharya can say about his contacts in the Inner Circle.

H.H. The appointment of the Shankaracharya is a physical one belonging to the Outer Circle, but unless it is made by the first Shankaracharya himself it is not valid. This is the reason for it being kept vacant.

The meeting ended with some personal questions from Mexico: the first was from:

Miss Nicholson. How can we increase our sensibility to know what is wanted from us by the people who are helping us (H.H. and F.C.R.)?

H.H. Empty yourself of your wishes, then the Leaders' wishes will prevail. Remember that the mighty Atman lives within you.

Q.2. Even my best meditation has traces of impurity all the time. Provided attention is on the Mantra and not on the thoughts going on at another level, does this matter? Or should one make one more effort towards total silence?

Q.3. One man recently initiated has suffered from headaches since. My advice was to meditate only very gently and for short periods until the headaches disappear. (I think he was pushing Mantra and not letting it flow). How can he be helped? He is very keen.

H.H. The Mantra can be pushed and pressed too far. One should relax the body and release tension so that the

Mantra can start easily. Tension causes the muscles in the blood vessels to block the blood supply to the brain, and this can lead to headaches.

Q.4. I have been asked by the B.B.C. to join a panel of people discussing Happiness. It sounds promising, doesn't it?

H.H. We have forgotten the real meaning of happiness. It is lost in pleasure and in pain—for pain chases pleasure as night chases day. Happiness is above this. We go to the theatre to laugh at comedy and cry at tragedy, but because you are only watching the play you can come out untouched. Happiness belongs not to the Drama, but to reality. With truth and consciousness it is one of the three states of the Atman.

Full answer of above summary, by J.

H.H. One should keep in mind that people have forgotten the real meaning of happiness. People take pleasure for happiness. Pleasure and pain are derived from material things and their association with one's state of mind (Ego). Pleasure and pain chase each other like day and night. Man's relation to pleasure and pain is always temporary and always changing, and everyone gets his share of these two like a daily ration from the ration shop. Happiness (Anand) is one of the natural manifestations of the Atman (Self). There are three states: bliss (happiness), consciousness and Truth. The real self can never exist without these three aspects. This is a higher state of consciousness. When one reduces the real self to a mere petty desire or associations, then one gets pleasure when desire is fulfilled and pain when it is not fulfilled. This may also contain happiness but only to the extent of the truth involved in that desire or association. Some happily subject themselves to pain for a purpose. This purpose would in that case have a grain of truth. This happiness is always just above pleasure and pain. You go to a theatre and see actors in laughter and tears and because you are only watching and observing the play without being involved in it, you come out happy. So happiness is that which is derived from truth and consciousness. In the case of the play, from the true characterisation and conscious plan, you enjoy truth and consciousness. One should be very careful not to confuse happiness with pain and pleasure.

Thursday 21 October—Morning

Miss P. If we had known the Absolute before, is it the memory of this that makes us make efforts and also tells us whether we are on the right path?

H.H. Knowledge is the same everywhere in the Absolute and in Atman. Atman's knowledge of the Absolute is direct. As true knowledge is stored in the Absolute, Atman has direct access to it. When we become too involved, however, in worldly activities and ambitions, we forget about that true knowledge. Eventually the habits grown from this involvement create clouds which block out true knowledge altogether. Then we have no access to true knowledge. When one comes across someone who has that access, our memory is stirred and we remember true knowledge. Once that memory is stirred it is impossible to forget in this life. One will always remember that true knowledge is there, and it is up to one whether to take it or not. For example if you stand under a tree on a river bank and look at the water, you will see and feel movement yourself, but a glance at the bank will show you that it is the water and not you which is moving. In the same way, if we get involved in worldly things we come to think that it is they which are stable, whereas if we have an observer, a glance inwards will show that it is we ourselves, the Atman which is stable and the worldly things are moving.

R. Asked about true and differentiated knowledge, and whether it is stored in Buddhi?

H.H. In Buddhi true knowledge is reflected through Manas, the mind and body. As true knowledge is appre-

ciated by Buddhi, so also is differentiated knowledge. The first glimpse of both is felt in Buddhi, later it is felt elsewhere in other ways.

R. The Shankaracharya previously said that before artists work, the image of the painting or the music must be present—is this image in Buddhi?

H.H. The concept does appear in Buddhi, but it is only a reflection of the Atman. For example, the state governor is responsible for law and order and welfare within his state, but all his authority derives from the King. He has none of his own.

R. How should the image of the Atman through realised man be stored? Was this image carried in the quiet of a stilled Buddhi?

H.H. Yes, this is possible if Buddhi is still and pure, but because of activities and impurities we cannot hold the image as we want. Buddhi is the element which discriminates, but the actual store of knowledge is in Chitta. Man earns money from work and gives some to his wife, and puts some in the safe. Buddhi gets the knowledge and stores it in Chitta, which is a sort of filing system. If things get wrongly filed, or mixed up in the filing cabinet, Buddhi can't find the right thing when it is wanted. It is very important to train to file correctly. Of course one must remember that unwanted, even dangerous things will slip into the files when Buddhi is not still.

R.A. The Shankaracharya has done so much for Dr. R. and myself that people in London would like to feel they had a direct link, with the Shankaracharya. Is this possible or must direct contact be made?

H.H. The door is always open to anyone as far as he is concerned. But fruits in season are easily available and cheap. If one wants fruits out of season they are more difficult to get and expensive. His influences can be taken from here to London and made available through Dr. R. or Mr. Allan. Dr. Roles' people should accept those influences from them and not try to get them direct from the Shankaracharya. If they have questions for the Shankaracharya they can always put them to him through their Leader and he will write. Very few people really earn, but many people have to be fed on those earnings. Equally, few people can earn, so many must be fed by them. Direct communication requires a certain level, and not everyone comes up to that level. People should reach up to their Leader and get what they can.

R.A. Does looking at photograph help or hinder those who have not seen him?

H.H. Yes, it would help. Keeps him and the sense of connection alive. Disciples carry them in India.

R. Says he has a picture in his room which people can see. Should he give copies to those who want? Also what about the album of pictures?

H.H. One picture is good enough—many only create curiosity. One will do the job. Thousands of people have pictures in India. Every time they see it they are connected like waggons to a railway engine. It is the engine that does all the work, but the connection is of course vital for it is that which carries the waggons to their destination. It is also all that is required. Only one picture should be kept.

Thursday 21 October—Morning (J)

Miss P. Have we known the Param-Atman before? Is it memory of that makes us make effort and also tells us whether we are on the right path?

H.H. The knowledge in the Absolute and the Self (Atman) is always the same. The Atman within the individual has that part of knowledge which belongs to the Absolute. If by analogy the true knowledge were taken to be a store in the Absolute, the individuals possess a part of it. The worldly activities and daily struggle for a living, all desires and volitions create certain obstacles and sheaths and due to the habit of being involved in them we forget the true knowledge. Those people who train us for the world lead us to that differentiated knowledge and the mechanical routine which makes it possible that for some time we have no direct access to knowledge which belongs to us. Sometime when you come across some people who have the connection, the impulse from them reminds you once again, and the memory of that experience is always there; and once aroused it would be impossible to forget in this life. The forgetting is possible only to us human beings; the Absolute never forgets, for if he did, all mediums of communication would come to an end. Once reminded you may not make much effort—that is different—but you will recognise that the knowledge is there. It is up to you to take action or not.

For example, if you stand by a river under a tree and gaze at the flowing water, you will experience the feeling that you are moving and the water is still. If you look away from the river, then you will find in fact that you are not moving, and it is only the water that is in movement. The same applies to our relationship with the world. When we turn inside then we find stability in ourselves and can observe that all the movement is in the world. If we get involved with the world, then we lose our stability and find the world stable and ourselves making all movements of activity.

R. Is the undifferentiated knowledge which we get from the Atman stored in Buddhi? And is the differentiated knowledge in Manas, etc.?

H.H. In Buddhi the true knowledge reflects. The Manas, senses and body are affected by knowledge. Just as true knowledge can be appreciated by Buddhi, the differentiated knowledge is also taken up by Buddhi. It is the clarity and stillness that will define what type of knowledge he has got.

R. H.H. has said that before anything is done an image is first formed. The same is true for an artist, a sculptor who makes a statue, a composer who makes music. Is that image formed in Buddhi?

H.H. Though the image and the concept are formed in Buddhi yet it is only a reflection of the Atman. For example, the governor of a state is responsible for doing everything, for looking after high and low and the general welfare within his state. He gets the authority from the King, and he simply carries it through.

R. One asks all this because one wants to create an ever-present image of one Self, the Atman, or of his appointed Fully-Realised Man. Is this done in Buddhi if it is stilled and purified?

H.H. Yes, this is the point of it, and it is done if Buddhi is still and pure, but where there is Tamas one cannot keep the image one wants. He says Buddhi is the element which discriminates, but the actual store of all the knowledge is Chitta. For instance, a man goes to the market and earns his livelihood and when he comes home he either gives the money to his wife or puts it in the safe. Buddhi also gets knowledge by discrimination and stores it in Chitta. But Chitta, which is a sort of filing system can file things wrongly; or things may get mixed up in the filing cabinet. So Buddhi cannot get the right thing at the right moment when wanted. It is very important to improve the filing and store our references systematically and keep them separate and classified so that Buddhi can make the best use of knowledge stored. Of course Buddhi also absorbs unwanted and even dangerous things when it is not still, when moving about with Manas.