

Tuesday 17 September

R. His Holiness saw yesterday a dark cloud of ignorance rising up, based I'm sure on a kind of intellectual pride. Head thinks it knows, but heart knows better. When you give so generously of the Knowledge why should some individual take it as his own? How to tell quickly enough the moment when Sattva has gone, and Rajas and Tamas take over?

H.H. To observe as to how Rajas and Tamas take over Sattva, one has to watch what one thinks, says and does. If all these three correspond to each other then the person must be good, and if there is disparity between them, then the person is evil; in fact the Rajas and Tamas take over and disparity in thinking, talking and doing begins. Manas and Buddhi are the main factors to govern one's actions. Buddhi is rational so it does not like to do wrong, but if it is weak and impure then Manas supported by senses rules the man and one would see that even without one's own consent one is doing wrong actions to please the senses. When the Buddhi is strong and pure then one would reason before embarking on any action, and that would give one a better understanding of the situation to do only the right action, and one soon learns to feel, think and act rightly. The key is within each individual and one has to ask oneself, and even if the Buddhi gives way under pressure it echoes its reason. To this one must learn to listen, howsoever feeble it may be. On the basis of this, one can decide whether the action was taken over by Rajas and Tamas or not.

R. The Manas is always inventing thousands of ways of excusing what Buddhi knows is wrong.

H.H. In such circumstances when Manas can take over and give excuses to carry on his way, one must look at the result. If the action is followed by misery, loss of energy, anger or anguish etc. to oneself or others, then the action could not have been reasonable, and if the result is good for himself and others for all time then it must be reasonable.

R. I am very thrilled by all the material His Holiness has given about the subtle level. It seems to me to require seeing everything in quite a new way. I can see it in medicine. One doesn't get right result because thinking too much of the coarse body. There are many cases like 'shock' where there is nothing physical wrong, but damage to subtle body is done. I would like to think in that way.

H.H. The physical ailments are obvious to deal with but when the physical trouble affects the mind then it becomes manifold. Even so the remedies are known and the cure can be achieved soon, but there are cases when the trouble cannot be diagnosed from the physical body, there one has to look into the subtle body of Manas, Buddhi and Chitta. In effect the physical body goes suffering and people become very thin, pale and lifeless. Even good food and medicine would not cure them. According to Indian system the subtle body is governed by the essence of one's actions. If one has performed unjust actions then the subtle body will be affected and ultimately the effect will be passed on to the physical level. The essence is accumulated through our present or past lives. One may say that such ailments are the punishment for previous wrong deeds. These may be result of near, past, or distant-past actions. A criminal does his crime to-day, but the proceedings take years; only when the judgement is passed would he be punished for his sin done years ago. By that time he might have become a reasonable man. To look into the subtle body is to look into the way one thinks, feels and into one's worries, etc. It is only the True Knowledge that can help cure the subtle body. In Mahabharat we have a good example:

The Kauravas were being led by the Teacher, Dronacharya. He was a mighty and skilful leader. The Pandavas found it difficult to defeat him. So Krishna tried a trick. Dronacharya was supposed to lay down his arms only if his son is dead. His son's name was Ashwatthama. There was an elephant of the same name which Arjuna was asked to kill. Everyone knew that only Yudhishtira would speak truth in all circumstances, so Krishna thought that if Yudhishtira said that Ashwatthama is dead, and truly an

elephant named Ashwatthama was killed, so Dronacharya would lay down his arms after hearing this sad news.

Yudhishtira refused to say the untruth but finally Krishna succeeded and he agreed to say Ashwatthama is dead, perhaps man or elephant. When he said the first part Krishna blew his conchshell to drown the next part and Dronacharya was deceived to his death.

After the Pandavas had won the war and ruled over India and died, then when Yudhishtira was led to heaven there he found his unrighteous arch-enemy sitting right in front of him. Yudhishtira thought it to be unjust and refused to take his place in heaven and wanted to see his own brothers. The victorious brothers were in hell, and when he was taken there he was told that Arjuna was proud of his skill in archery and insulted other warriors, Nakul was proud of his learning in mathematics, Sahdeva was proud of his looks and Bhima was unconsiderate for others' food and deprived even old and needy to fill his own belly. Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas loved Arjuna more than others so they were all punished for their sins. Yudhishtira was also punished to come to the doors of hell for helping in unjust killing by speaking in ambiguous terms. Later they all went to heaven.

Each has to suffer for whatever injustice one does. Time and space would never be a barrier in discharge of punishment. The accidental, sudden diseases for which no reason can be found in physical sense have their origin in the subtle or causal body. Such ailments need Truth to dispel the wrong or make one appreciate the situation and prepare oneself to accept the punishment and not worry. This could save a lot more trouble.

Private

R. Now, this is a case in point. This is a lady who has been very devoted but seems not able to be in peace and quiet. She moves so much and is so restless, and tries to put everything in order but has become a health problem, though no physical cause is found. This question was written in her better moments:

G. When God takes his place in me my eyes see only the warmth, love and rightness in people and places—when I am in God (once only) all this existence disappears in Union. There seems a vast difference between these states, and yet how can there be? Is it that in the first one is permeated by Sattva, and in the second, one is absorbed by a super-abundance of it?

H.H. This situation arises from Rajas which has a touch of Sattva. People start thinking during meditation. There are two types of thinking. One type thinks about the physical and sensual world of their own and the other rises above the personal world, and thinks about Scriptural readings or God Himself. The one which thinks of God during their meditation must have more Sattva compared with the other type. Although all thinking is bad during meditation, but those who think purely about God are just very close to the next step when they would stop thinking and dive deep in peaceful meditation. Such cases are not really bad. The danger is with those who either go to sleep or whose minds go blank, for they are entirely governed by Tamas.

R. A letter from Mrs Sundaraj was received which says that lately when she meditates, she is full of angry thoughts about her husband, and his family, and she cannot see where the idea of bliss exists. So her meditation becomes only an exercise. I think she realises that she has no good company. Is there anything I could write to her?

H.H. During this journey through this creation one meets many people and establishes many relationships. One might take one husband in one life and change over to another in the next life. But ultimate husband is the Absolute which all are desirous to meet. All our effort and discipline is aimed at this ultimate husband. In our everyday life when we receive a guest in the house, one always takes care to clean the house and remove

unnecessary or undignified objects to the basement. The same may be applied to meditation. When we go to meditate, we proceed to meet the ultimate Guest and it is our duty to tidy up everything and leave behind all undignified things. Angry thoughts about a husband and his family are undignified objects which one can put aside, and if one likes them very much one can pick them up again only after meditation. If one does that, the bliss will emerge and help even in ordinary everyday life dealings.

Conflict arises out of attachment. Attachment is a sort of deformed love. Due to attachment and desire to be loved and cared for, the conflict arises and takes the form of mental agony. The usual situation is that one thinks that since I love that person, I must also be loved in return. Such demand as a proof for love creates tension and the conflict arises. The best way of keeping up good relations or living together is to serve the person you love and do not put up any demand. If you serve and also demand then it becomes inferior and the love is not really good enough. If one sincerely served the loved one without asking for anything in return, one can be sure that the loving heart will respond very soon and one will find that one gets enough love and care in return without asking for it. This she must understand to bring about any change for better.

Wednesday 18 September

Allan's First Meeting

H.H. Asked how Allan was?

R.A. Replied that he was well and very grateful to His Holiness for receiving him again this time with his wife.

H.H. Glad to welcome wife, for a man and wife must work together for anything to be achieved. There are always two forces—Purusha and Prakriti. Prakriti is the force of Nature and by taking a wife a man becomes forceful. In all religious and auspicious activities they both must come together and participate as equals.

Meditation

R.A. What is the relationship between subtle body and Atman?

H.H. Before seeing the relationship between the subtle body and the Atman, let us see what the Atman is. Atman is pure existence; whatever is, is the Atman. This pure existence manifests in many ways, but the mystery about all the manifestations is that the Atman which is pure existence does not change, grow or decay, and remains the same all the time. This Atman has two other aspects which are known as Knowledge and Bliss, and through these it manifests itself. Aspect of knowledge is very much related to the subtle world, and the bliss to the coarse world. The coarse or the material world is only the fulfilment of the knowledge which is the ideal or the subtle.

The physical world is the effect and the subtle world is its cause or the substance. For example, a pot is made of clay. One can break the pot and reduce it to clay. In doing so there hasn't been any loss or gain to the clay. The clay remains the same in quality, weight or volume but the manifest pot is gone and with it is gone the capacity to hold water, form etc. This shows that the manifest world goes back to the subtle world because subtle world is the cause of the manifest world. Even this subtle world goes back to the causal and the causal into the Absolute which is the Atman, the Ultimate reality or existence.

The subtle body is the cause of the coarse body and the causal body is cause of the subtle body. If one wants to know about a person one can see the physical form, but this would not be enough unless one hears what he says and what he thinks. His words speak much more about the person because the sound and words or sentences arise from the causal body and come through the subtle body and then manifest through the coarse body of tongue and mouth. According to the science of language one knows that sound is created in the mouth by

manipulating the tongue in certain ways; but the philosophy of language tells us more; that before a sentence is sounded it appears as an idea, and even before that, it originates from the conscious being which has a causal body with Essence surrounding it. Atman desires and a spark emanates which in subtle body forms the idea and in time gives rise in the manifest world to a sentence. The idea which is a part of the subtle world is the intermediary which joins the causal with the coarse. By necessity it must have the properties of both the bodies. The light of the Atman falls on this subtle substance and it gets impregnated with consciousness (like a mirror reflecting sun). It is conscious-like but not conscious. Because of these dual characteristics it can translate the desire of the Atman into actions, and transmit the knowledge from the sensuous world for the happiness and satisfaction of the being. The Realization of the Self is only possible when the subtle body works properly and also the appreciation of the manifest world is possible only if it is intact.

R.A. In the coarse world one can say that his body is Mr Allan. Is the subtle body personalised or is it universal?

H.H. Just as we find difference between the earth, water, fire, etc. there certainly is some difference between the coarse body and the subtle body. The coarse world is manifest world; the subtle world is the cause of the manifest world. When one has a particular coarse body then naturally one must have a particular subtle body. The difference is in its substance and thus in its sphere of influence. Just as a coarse body has a limit the subtle body also has a limit, but its limits are far more extensive than the coarse.

These limits vary from person to person. One can try to increase one's strength through physical exercises, but one can never get the strength of an elephant! In the same way the possibilities of achieving full extent of subtle forces is possible through certain disciplines, but one must know that it has its limit. Although we are made of the same universal substance of the subtle world, each of us is different. If it wasn't so each of us could know the thoughts of other people. But the possibility of knowing other people's thoughts and feelings can be a fact provided one raises oneself from individual level to the universal level.

The general concept of the coarse world and the subtle world which is known to common people is that the coarse body is the biggest body, inside which is the subtle body, and smaller than the subtle body is the causal body, and within that small causal body is the Atman hiding in a remote corner.

But the Reality is quite different on individual and universal level—both. The coarse world is the smallest of all and surrounded by an extensive subtle world which again is merged into an extensive sphere of causal world. And then everything is covered by the Atman which has no limits and no division.

Similarly, the possibilities and potentialities of these worlds and bodies also vary. The possibilities of coarse body are very limited and one knows by experience that the body gets exhausted in six hours. But the subtle body has no such restrictions. In this body the concept of time and space changes. One can create huge manifest constructions in the mind; travel far and wide in no time; can experience a whole life in one moment of a dream, or sum up a life-long activity in a single moment. This subtle body can reduce the whole creation into a point, and one can write volumes and volumes to express this point.

R.A. If the subtle world is so extensive, isn't it more a question of getting to know this subtle body rather than growth of subtle body; and is it through Buddhi that one reaches this, by listening more to the voice of Buddhi?

H.H. It is not only the information about the subtle world which is enough for the growth of the subtle world, but as you have said the use of Buddhi is very essential. The function of Buddhi is to discriminate the right from the wrong. Unless one uses this faculty one would not be able to conduct oneself on the right way. The development of the subtle body is possible only by use and practice of discrimination.

The knowledge and practice both are essential, because no one would embark on any practice unless he has the knowledge about the subject. It is always the knowledge that initiates activity. The activity is the practice of

knowledge which brings its manifestations and effects into being. If one wants to improve the subtle body, under certain discipline, one must gather full knowledge of the subjects involved and devote full energy to practise them to get the best required results.

M.A. Recently I have come more and more to see that it is the personal approach to things, and taking things personally which is the main barrier to development. Helping Dr. Roles and trying to serve the School has become natural in terms of time and interest, but so much of this is really wasted by this personal aspect. I feel it is the Meditation which has led me to see this, and the longing to be free grows more and more, but how to leave it quickly when you see it? I have just seen some records of the recent conversations, but I have not been able to study them all yet. I feel the idea of the 'monkey' and of listening to the voice of Buddhi should answer my question, but as the question was so strong with me coming to India, I Hope his Holiness will forgive me repeating it?

H.H. It would be wrong to say that personal aspect in the work makes it wasted, for nothing can go to waste. What really happens is that the personal world is the coarse world and the general world is subtle world. Whenever one brings anything on personal level or works according to personal aspect, one creates a limitation based on physical world, and according to the level of the individual the limits may vary, but in all such cases the limit will be narrow. This limited world of limited service will create only limited effect.

If one is fortunate to see this personal aspect as a limited field, then one is looking for a broader aspect, which is the general aspect or, in our terms, the subtle world, the world of knowledge and vast potentiality. If one could cross over to the general world from the personal world, one would find that the field of service and sphere of influence has become extensive. Every human being is very much like the Absolute. The existence of this creation is the desire of the Absolute to manifest itself and enjoy. The same is seen in all individuals. Everyone in the universe desires to manifest and be blissful. It is only in this direction all our activities are directed. There could never be an exception.

In Mahabharata we find a curious story of a different type, but even that ultimately proves the point.

The great war was over and the victorious Pandavas took charge of the state. Their mother, Kunti, was asked by Shri Krishna to ask for a boon. She asked for suffering. Shri Krishna observed that she might be doing so due to emotional imbalance, so he asked her again to reconsider and ask for something reasonable. Kunti replied that she was perfectly reasonable in asking for suffering because there was no greater joy than being in the company of Krishna. Now, due to the victory, all material wealth of services and honours will be easily available to her and she may soon be attached to them. In fact, these material pleasures are not conducive to real liberation. If she could be given suffering, she would remember Krishna more often and would be able to see him and get his advice which she is sure leads to greatest happiness of all. So in fact she is asking for suffering only to ensure ultimate happiness.

Thus one could see the wisdom and the ultimate nature of all beings that everyone without exception wants to manifest and be blissful. Not many people could appreciate this point. If one embraces suffering and trouble, in fact one is working for a deeper happiness, and if one tries to organize things for worldly happiness, one is working for a more painful bondage and suffering. Dark night brings in the glorious morning, and warm bright days turn into dark nights.

It seems better to start from dark and end with glorious light! If one sees that personal aspect does not bring in enough light and bliss, one should change over to the general aspect. There would again be another step to march on to the abstract aspect, which would be truly universal in its manifestation and blissfulness.

M.A. I have been very interested in reading what His Holiness has recently said about 'disturbances.' I had regarded the disturbances as obstacles to work, but perhaps they are the tools of the work itself?

H.H. The disturbances have a quality of coming and going. They come and go for they are not real like Atman which is always there. But they do have two functions. Just as an examination comes as a disturbance to the students, so do these disturbances appear in the work. They always set a limit to be overcome. If one succeeds in crossing over the limit, one always lands on the higher level. If one gets moved by the disturbances and stumbles, then one stays put or falls into lower level. This is what happens in the schools each year. So the disturbances come as a punishment, but hold a reward also. A wise person, who is not disturbed by the disturbances and who handles the situation with reason and firmness, moves on to the higher level with increased force and efficiency, whereas the fool gets agitated and falls. It is a punishment for the fool and a reward for the wise.

When one goes on a street and is about to take a turn at a crossing, which is very much like disturbances in life, one may see a traffic controller or signal post. You may be signalled to stop till he finds the road free for you to turn into and move on. One needs to wait as long as the 'go' signal is not given. Wisdom demands slowing down and waiting until the opportunity comes to move on. If one became impatient and tries to fight with the disturbances, one would run amok and either find the end of the journey by meeting with an accident, or be liable to punishment by the law. One should in moments of disturbance slow down, see the situation, keep one's attention on the present moment, find the answer which is itself there, and negotiate the disturbance in a peaceful manner, and move on to the next level of one's journey.

Thursday 19 September

R.A. Is it possible for an ordinary man to enter the subtle body at will?

H.H. Subtle body is the domain of mind. Before one gets into any physical activity one has to desire. This desire passes or manifests only through the subtle body and then the senses and body get into action. Thus all activities find their origin in the subtle body, even the desire. The subtle body in certain circumstances could work without the support of the coarse body but the coarse body could never work without the support of the subtle body. In a dream one could experience about the coarse or physical world even though there is no involvement with the physical world. One may find oneself physically in the dream although the dreamer could never be physically present there. Secondly, when the physical body perishes, the subtle body survives and carries on with the next physical body.

R.A. When one is asleep, is one nearer the subtle body?

H.H. Definition of a man is very much related to the physical body, but as a being, the Atman, causal, subtle and the physical bodies all work together. Atman gives the essential force to the causal body, causal body gives force to the subtle body and the subtle body gives force to the physical body. When one is in sleep or dream state, the contact with the coarse body is very limited, but the Atman, causal and subtle bodies are in contact with each other.

R. The story of the arrow-maker last year has made a great impression on many people in London. One (Miss C.N.) writes: "I would like to repeat Mr. Allan's question: 'How could we acquire the attention of the arrow-maker?' Until I have learnt to dive deep through attention more often, and get real rest, how can I be of real use?" We have thought that this kind of attention when you wouldn't hear a wedding is only to be had during real meditation.

H.H. The attention employed by the arrow-maker would differ from stage to stage in completion of his work. The arrow was made in different stages. First the rough form was created and gradually the shape was refined until it came to the most delicate stage to shape and sharpen the point. According to the coarseness or fineness

of the work involved, one would see that the fullness of attention also changes. If the work is coarse one doesn't need to use the finest energy by giving one pointed attention because coarse energy would be good enough to accomplish the job. As the work progresses and comes to finer stages, it would demand more and more attention and when it comes to the last stage or the finest work, only then would one need to use one's finest energy available and put in greatest attention. When one reaches to the stage of full attention as experienced by the arrow-maker, one would see that the outer world is practically cut off and a love of Self takes over and this keeps one busy with full attention on the work in hand. All this is known as Dharana. This means "to hold on", which is described by Patanjali in his Yogasutras in the words: "to hold on one's attention at a point is known as Dharana." This does not actually relate to meditation: meditation is something different.

R. When one sits to meditate, one first of all puts aside the coarse physical world. With love for the Atman in one's heart, and attention on the Mantra, one goes through more and more deep layers of the subtle world, and the object of meditation is to penetrate to the causal world—would that be so?

H.H. There are five natural states of human life. Three states are very common—sleeping, dreaming and waking states [*awake not in the real sense*]. Out of the other two, one is the unconscious state, and the other is Samadhi (Turiya). The two last are very similar wherein there is no experience. In unconscious state there is no connection between the experiencer and the physical world, whereas in Turiya the experiencer deliberately cuts off the experience even though connected, and only enjoys the Self. In meditation one could experience any of these states. One may sit still with closed eyes and yet make movement inwardly in subtle body or think about one's affairs or go into a blank mind, or even go to sleep and dream.

One can also by proper meditation achieve the state of Samadhi. In this state there could never be any experience at all except the Self. If one experiences love for the Self or attending to the Mantra, he hasn't reached the fifth state. All such experiences are certainly better than others, but not the best. The real meditation does not last for long. One would be fortunate to have 2, 3, or 6 minutes of real meditation which would be union with the Self. This would be sufficient to give enough energy to perform one's actions with ease and efficiency. If one could get more real meditation then the result would be still better and the activities by such a person would be very refined and the sphere of influence will be great—happiness would prevail all round him and the result would be very obvious to all. This whole operation is very much like waiting for a trunk call for three hours, and when it comes, to finish the conversation within three minutes. Although half-an-hour has been prescribed one only gets a few minutes of real meditation, and they are enough to lead a happy and efficient life.

R. For a few minutes one looks with the eye of the Atman and sees the thoughts and desires (which are far away) as servants, and almost imperceptible. Is this on right direction?

H.H. This may lead to full meditation when the subtle body of Manas, Buddhi and Chitta is not experienced and there is only the Atman. It is like husband and wife—they talk intimately only when they are alone. If there is someone else present they never express their most intimate thoughts. So in meditation also, when there is nothing between the meditator and the Self, full experience of unity with the Self is possible. Everything from the coarse material world to the causal body must be removed to achieve full unity.

M.A. What His Holiness has said about the duration of peace during the half-hour is very helpful because I think one is often greedy or discontented about this. But in leaving all distractions of the outer world, one still finds one has a rather troublesome friend who accompanies one almost to the end commenting all the time on the quality and changes in meditation. How can one leave this friend?

H.H. There is no escape from this friend, for the questions he raises are essentially reasonable! If one gets a few

minutes of proper meditation that is enough. Even so, there is no need to stop at that limit, but one can work for more of such experiences and finer energy. It is like an examination in which one may pass with 33 marks, but it will be a third class pass. One needs more marks for second and first class, and higher still for a distinction. This is a good question for it shows the way for better results, but one must take care that this friend doesn't become more important than the meditation! One may hear him but not be bothered about him. Although thirty minutes are prescribed, only two or three minutes full meditation is enough to pass, but one should always work for higher marks. The teacher doesn't look for mistakes to criticise or rebuke the student, but he does so to help him to improve his standard.

(Dr. Roles when he failed his exam did not take this as punishment, but worked harder to learn more so as to qualify for first class.)

R.A. Gave observation about one of his war experiences when time practically stood still and asked if this was connected with subtle body?

H.H. Physical world has its own speed and the subtle body operates at much higher speed. When a situation develops with which the physical body cannot cope, one does sometimes find that the subtle body takes over. Whenever this happens, its speed of working makes the actions in the coarse world seem to slow down or even to stop. This is because of the different space and time scales of the subtle world. People like to describe these occasions as miraculous, but in fact the forces of the subtle body are always available although they are not used except in emergencies.

After the meeting in which R.A. recounted his war-time experiences of change in time and with His Holiness's answer, a retired government meteorologist who was frequently at the meetings came up to him. He explained that as a 'weather man', he often had to make calculations on temperature and conditions at different altitudes, especially for air navigation. On one occasion there was an emergency and he was asked for the details at a certain altitude in a great hurry. He found he gave an immediate answer without calculation, but on checking, this proved to be quite accurate, and he now realised this was what His Holiness described as the operation of the subtle world.

R. Realised man also always seems to have plenty of time to take in the person who asks the question and others in the room as well, and yet answers instantaneously. Nothing seems to come between him and Atman.

H.H. To be Realized means to be experienced. A Realised man has experienced all stages and states of human life. All experiences, all knowledge is accumulated in subtle world and the inner circle is always connected to this subtle body of Knowledge. Secondly, the same questions have all been asked before because human beings are always the same. The answers have also been the same because the remedies are always the same. An experienced barrister when asked questions answers out of his own memory store because he knows the answers from his own knowledge and experience, whereas an inexperienced barrister must consult his books. A Realized man answers quickly because he doesn't have to think about the answer. He lives in the present which contains all questions and all answers.

R.A. From what His Holiness said a moment ago, the subtle body takes over in emergencies which are usually connected with outside events. Can one do anything from inside oneself to get the subtle body to take over more frequently and without crisis?

H.H. Yes, it is possible to do so even in ordinary everyday circumstances. The subtle body is the intermediary between the Atman and the causal body on one side, and the physical body on the other side. Whatever energy the subtle body received from the causal body is passed on to the coarse body to nourish and manifest. To do this continuously and purposefully the subtle body must be peaceful and restful otherwise the connections

would be broken and disrupted due to mobility. The meditation allows the subtle body to be restful and peaceful and keep balanced contact with the other two bodies. This results in availability of more potent energy to the coarse body and thus the possibility of purposeful and efficient actions arises.

One who is restful in subtle body can also be purposeful and skilful in his actions. Those who are not efficient in their work are lazy and do not rise to the moment; and they realize the purpose of actions too late, when the action has already been done wrongly and the result inevitable; all this happens because they are not stable and peaceful in their subtle body.

People who cannot sleep during the night seem to be sick only because their subtle body is agitated by mechanical thoughts and will not stop. If the subtle body is not healthy, restful and stable, then the coarse body will never be efficient. Just as the coarse body needs enough sleep to remain healthy, strong and efficient, so does the subtle body need rest to remain healthy, strong and efficient. This is possible only by meditation. But some people can not even be restful during meditation and waste their time. One must decide what one wants and needs and give up the unwanted. Those who want to use subtle body more efficiently must make sure the subtle body gets more rest.

Friday 20 September

M.A. With subtle body's different time-scale, does it cover many lives of the physical body? If so, does a right action in this life redeem the faults in past lives?

H.H. In this creation there is a cycle of lives which repeats itself 8,400,000 times. Atman is supposed to move through these lives and the human form is achieved at a crossroads, for only in this form may the journey be reshaped for better or worse. Man takes his place at the mid-point of creation. On higher level are the Gods and angels and on lower level are the animals etc. The lower beings and also the higher beings don't have the power to discriminate and act freely according to their will. Both these levels either enjoy or suffer according to their actions during human form. After completing the major rewards or punishments they both come back to human form. The Gods descend to human form with more Sattva, men who are re-born as human beings have more Rajas, and animals etc. who come up to human form usually have much Tamas. By the time one comes back to human form one has gathered essential effects from different lives, but with the new element of discrimination (Buddhi) each one is provided with all possibilities leading up to Liberation. The essential nature of Samskar makes up our attitude. With the power of discrimination is also made available the True Knowledge to discriminate from the untrue. It is only because of such facilities provided to human form that man is made responsible for his actions.

The discrimination is the work of the subtle body and this body works on a different scale of time and space and only due to this is it possible to redeem the faults of previous lives or accumulate enough sin to suffer punishment through all 8,400,000 lives. Subtle body takes most effect from the company one lives with. With good company one may be redeemed and with bad company one may work one's way to hell. Even in animal forms when the subtle body of pet animals gets closely related to human beings through emotion, then it could equally be possible for a pet to move up to the human form quickly. In Bhagavad Gita it has been said that whatever one longs for at the moment of death, one will get in the next life. It is only the most cherished idea that would cross your mind at such a moment so one has to work hard to cherish a good idea. This also is done by the subtle body. In a way anything is possible through the subtle body.

R.A. It was said that the attention required by the arrow-maker was different to that required during meditation. Could His Holiness say more about this?

H.H. The chief difference between the two is that the arrow-maker was attending to something outward and was using his skill and intelligence to its best.

In the case of meditation there isn't anything physical. The meditation can be divided into three stages. The primary or preparatory, the intermediate or active, and the final or creative stage. In the primary stage there are five different things to be considered and they are: preparing the body, regulating the body and activities, posture, breath control, and bringing back the mind to its subject. The body is prepared to suit refined actions by regulating diet, etc. Regulating activities is done by keeping most suitable time. Posture is regulated by keeping the spine straight and sitting as comfortably as will keep the body still for the required period; and shutting out the outer world as much as possible. Breath control is possible only if the spine is straight. With a straight spine it is possible to breathe deep.

Our body has two streams of breath (Prana) in use which are known as Ida and Pingala. By a full balance in posture and having deep breathing, it is possible to connect the two so that it could pass through Sushumna which is a unified chain leading to the top of the head. When this becomes possible and the Prana travels from the top of the head to the lowest part of the spine then the centre of energy is evoked, but this would come only after a successful meditation by reaching the final stage. Having regulated the breath one starts the Mantra and finds the mind attending to other things than Mantra. Here one has to bring it back to the Mantra. All this is the primary work.

Then comes the intermediate stage when one attends to the Mantra and goes with the rhythm. In doing so one goes to very fine rhythm and there one has to attend to the finest rhythm. This brings one to the brink of the final stage which is known as Samadhi. There are two types of Samadhi. One is the Savikalpa Samadhi in which the object of meditation is still present. There in the deepest part of the being a seed exists which comes out first with the break of Samadhi.

There is a story of a person who went to a King to win his favour by demonstrating Samadhi. He agreed to go into Samadhi for twelve years in exchange for a black horse which he thought was the best horse in the King's stables. He was buried, but before the twelve years had passed the King and the horse both died, and a new king took over. He wanted to rebuild the place where this man was buried, and knew nothing of the previous agreement. The man was found, and at the end of the twelve-year period he opened his eyes and asked at once for the black horse. He had carried the idea of the black horse all those twelve years, and of course was disappointed.

The other Samadhi is Nirvikalpa wherein there is none but the unity or the Self. In this the Self only experiences itself for everything else is left behind and a contact with Ultimate energy is made.

This in general is the form of meditation, and the attention involved in this is right from the coarse body to the most causal of all that is the Self.

R.A. Since we haven't been told about exercises and control of breath, should we know about them?

H.H. The way this System of Meditation has been handed to you is designed in such a way that the primary stages are fulfilled. You have been asked to sit with straight spine which is enough to regulate other factors. Secondly the meditation is progressing in such a way that it is not necessary to introduce extra exercises.

R. In continuation of our first question about the Arrow-maker, we use the word 'identification' (which is not the same as 'attachment') in the sense that identification is becoming one with, merging with some object, and clearly the only object in the universe that one should merge with is the Atman. So, when one is not doing anything so delicate as pointing an arrow (and most of our time is spent on rather coarse occupation needing only partial attention), the mind tends to merge with, become one with all sorts of trivial things. We want to know how to avoid this kind

of trap into which we are led by spare attention not used in ordinary activity. Does this follow from doing meditation better and better?

H.H. Just as in the West you have the example of transformation of chrysalis into butterfly, in India it has been observed that when a certain type of wasp captures another of the same family (but different species), and hovers around it for a long time humming, then the captured creature gets identified with the wasp's humming and becomes a wasp. Identification in itself is neither good nor bad, but if you identify with an ordinary thing you would become ordinary, and likewise if the object of identification is the Absolute, one would become Absolute. In identification one attends to the identity of the object and in doing so one forgets one's own identity and slowly merges into the other object and becomes very much like it. Even in meditation one can see that the identification is transferred from the coarse body to the absolute Self in different stages.

R. Last year His Holiness said that we should allow people to do what they love most, then we become more like what we love.

H.H. There is an intermediate step in that process. When allowed to do what one loves, one attends and develops attention which, when constant, could be transferred to meditation. But it would be very useful to establish an intermediate stage by widening the field of work and make it a general work for a common purpose rather than just the individual profit. One can get them to attend to work for others with full attention.

M.A. In relation to the first question, it seems strange when only our physical body is limited to 70 or 80 years that we have such a small limited sense of time. Is it because we don't understand the importance of the present moment, and do not live enough in the moment?

H.H. The concept of time differs from coarse to subtle level. The 70 or 80 years which are available to our life is based on the calculation of the physical world. Physical world has its own pace and all time is related to this movement which the nature affords it. The physical body is tuned to that time-scale and so naturally one has to respect that time-scale for all physical activities. One has to be in the present moment to use and enjoy that according to its pace. The concept of this time changes when you come to the subtle world. Meditation is mainly handled by the subtle body which is governed by different time-scale.

If one wanted to go to Badrinath which is 12,000 feet up in the Himalayas one would need at least fifteen days to cover the journey there and back, some money, clothes, companions in case one got lost and good health. This one can do on the physical plane, but once you have completed this journey by physical body you can journey there and back in a matter of moments by your subtle body. In this journey you do not need time, money or companions and not even good health. This subtle world reduces this time to a different dimension. Meditation is more of a coming home which is very easy. What one really needs is faith, sincerity and continuous effort. If one does meditate faithfully and sincerely and keeps up continuous efforts one would be able to comprehend and complete the journey to the Real Self very much sooner. On the general level a full effort of this sort would need only one year to allow growth of being to full freedom. But in our case it takes much longer, and the length of time seems long, or in other words, the length of life span seems short to achieve liberation, which is completely wrong. Half-an-hour twice a day is in fact enough, but we only use a few minutes of this time. This is enough for the twenty-four hours, but if one really used the whole half-hour one could undo the effect of previous lives and reach unity with the Self.