

14 January 1972

Allahabad

Reply to FCR's letter of 21 December 1971

Translator—Dixit

Dear Dr. Roles,

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 up-lift of your own self and that of your circle...

Shankaracharya.

14 January 1972

Allahabad

Reply to FCR's letter of 3 January 1972

Translator—Dixit

R. had asked: 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.

Dear Dr. Roles,

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 know that path of love is such a path that Param-Atman is pouring all his favours and blessings on it 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 automatically when the Antahkaran concentrates. Then you can 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.

All the best for all the members of your circle,

Shankaracharya.

16 January 1972

Allahabad

Translated by R. L. Dixit

The Mela

H.H. 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 attained Self-realisation while he was still in his mother's womb and before he was actually born. He therefore refused to be born into a world full of Maya and stayed in the womb for 12 years. Ultimately he was persuaded to come out on the condition that he would go away to the jungles immediately on being born and would not stay in the house of his parents at all. So, as soon as he was born, 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 hang-over of 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, this 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 likes and dislikes lead to unhappiness.

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 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 current 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 Shrimad Bhagvad Gita. 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 Mahatman 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 goes into the next world. Tell him to carry this little 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, then 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 allegiance and affection to the 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.

20 January 1972

Allahabad

Translated by R. L. Dixit

The 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 Mantras 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 life, thus lived and full of action. There is no other way to avoid a coating of evils while leading a human life.

According to Shrimad 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 nature, 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 did not appear to be deriving any benefit from it. This is because their tendencies and nature has not changed.

We should bear in mind that whatever God has given to the world. He has ‘given it up’ to the world. He no longer asserts any ownership over it. We should also 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.

Once four business men set out on a 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. Rejoicing 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, but 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 conspired to mix poison with the food they were taking for them.

When they returned with food, the other two shot them dead. But they were hungry. So they devoured the food brought for them at once. They fell asleep never to wake up 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 may 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 regard and use everything as a gift from the Param-Atman and practise Bhakti, then our reasoning becomes clear and we can lead a long, happy life as said in the Upanishad Mantras.

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 an 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 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.

23 January 1972

Allahabad

Translated by R. L. Dixit

The Mela

In the ageless continuum of time, it seems so futile to take account of all the events that go on making and unmaking 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 re-birth. Actually, each birth writes down the destiny of death and each death writes down the destiny of birth. The Gita says that there is neither any ‘birth’ nor any ‘death’, but it is merely a cycle of change, 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 of each will illustrate the phenomenon.

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 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. In order to recognise 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 Maharajah 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 indications of a renounced person.”

The Maharajah 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 Maharajah.

“Do you see the indication of a renounced person now?” said the Mahatma. “He is entirely fearless, as that he can kick out even a Maharajah.”

Since a fully realised person renounces everything, people think that he must be undergoing great sufferings since he may be without even 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 and be-all of life. A Bhakti (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 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.

Divine Incarnations

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.

29 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 day's taxation to be excessive and launched an agitation against it; but now those days' taxation is considered very light compared with to-day's.

The reason is that increase of material facilities does 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 as 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 imposter than 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.”

9 March 1972

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 H. H. 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.

Sanyasis, 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 policemen or a soldier of his duty.

17 March 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

I learn that Shri Jaiswal was lucky to see H.H. on his way to Benares and to discuss the possibility of a visit to him by Mr. Allan and myself next autumn. We should look forward with joy to that. Also that H.H. may return for a few days. So I am trying to get a message through you to him.

The programme of his sayings on the subject of ‘thinking of Param-Atman all the time’ continues to be the only safe-and-sure rope for me to cling to in difficult times. It has also reached about 100 people; though one only hears of results very gradually since they are asked to do the programme privately and not talk about it.

Some of us are also getting great profit from the 4 talks given at the Mela which you sent to us. There are many interesting subjects contained in them, which emerge only slowly—like ‘we also search for light in the darkness; but the Sun’s light fails to show up the world’.

There is a question about the sentence in the talk of 23rd January— “Why the incarnation of Param-Atman is divine, but that of ordinary people not divine, is due to associations”. Could he enlarge on this as I am not sure how to take it?

Also a most important subject further on in the same talk; ‘Pain and suffering are two different things; pain

is a bodily experience while suffering is mental'. Our Western teaching tells us to 'give up our suffering'. I suppose that pain is inevitable for embodied beings but one could be free from suffering if one gave up attachment.

All best wishes.

Gratefully,

F.C.R.

4 April 1972

Allahabad

Translated by R.L.Dixit

Discourse

Context: Verse V, Ch. VIII, of Shrimad 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 and not when you were young, He would be satisfied even then!

The 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. Shrimad Bhagavad says:

“Through the inner ear of a Bhakta (devotee), I make my way into his Antahkaran 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 a jungle. 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 as four people could not 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, disturb me in my work and increase my desires.”

Facilities lead to desires and desires mean death.

There are troubles on every path. So the path of 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 a Bhakta 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.

6 April 1972

Allahabad

Dear Dr. Roles,

I got your letter of 17th March, and hope you got my reply of 25th. In the meantime I also got your letter of 20th March. As expected, H.H. arrived here on 3rd April. He is going out again today and will be here again from 11th to 18th April.

On the 4th I met him to convey your two letters and also attended his evening discourse. I am enclosing a synopsis as you wanted. Regarding your other points, his reply is as follows:

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 re-born as a consequence of their own actions.
2. Param-Atman incarnates to attract people towards him and for their good. An ordinary person is re-born 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. An ordinary person is not so. etc.

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 take a debt, we should repay it rather than renounce it.

I am now gradually getting over my shingles. I shall try to send you more talks when H.H. returns on 11th and I thank you for your kind feelings.

Yours sincerely,

R.L.Dixit.

14 April 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

Many thanks for the answers and report of the talk on 3rd April. It just came in time for a meditation meeting of about 200 people, so I was able to read some of that talk which raised the level of Sattva!

If H.H. is still in Allahabad, perhaps you might convey to him this message:

“I am most grateful for his answer and his words about incarnations, which committed to memory help greatly to keep Param-Atman in the mind. But what I particularly wanted to know is “What does he include in the term—‘incarnations of Param-Atman’? Does he refer only to those rare, divine incarnations as of the Lord Krishna or the Christ of the Christian Gospels? Or does he mean incarnations in the Antahkarana through the ears of the Bhakta?”

I ask this because the other night after reading Viveka-Chudamani, I had a lovely experience which lasted the whole night. Whenever I woke up, I seemed to be in the presence of the Leaders of the Holy Tradition—the present Shankaracharya, the first Shri Shankara, Vyasa and the characters in the Gita—they all seemed to be one—I couldn’t tell any difference or which was which! It seemed that in a sense the Param-Atman frequently reincarnates in successive leaders of the Tradition. But I don’t want to teach what is untrue.

With great love and gratitude.”

F.C.R.

15 April 1972

Ashram Talk

Poverty Blissful

H.H. 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.”

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

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 Realised 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 result of that action. But a Realised 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.

H.H. 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.

17 April 1972

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 Keertan, while Shankaracharya pleaded for Advaita (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 find out for oneself (and, like them, obtain Realisation 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 recognised in the verses of the Vedas. They recognise 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. 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.

21 April 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

I realize from my heart how very uninteresting my letters must have seemed to the Shankaracharya. I have been simply pretending to be devoted to the Param-Atman (like the story you relayed of the pretended 'Prince of Abagarh'). Now that I realize this, much more Sattva is present and his words mean so much more.

I don't know whether he has already departed on his travels so you may not have a chance to relay this.

The final proofs of my book have been returned to the printers and I will see that you get a copy when it comes out, perhaps in about three weeks' time.

Yours very gratefully,

F.C.R.

28 April 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

Many thanks for your last two communications, including the one that came this morning, namely yours of 22nd April.

Many thanks particularly to H.H. for the series of answers and what he said at his talks, which are proving of the greatest value.

These have convinced me that until I myself have achieved union, nothing else that we can do in the name of Self-realisation and under the guidance of himself and the Holy Tradition can be wholly right. I am at last really convinced that this comes first and that all the rest of it is just looking good instead of being good.

There are probably about three other letters which have not reached you because of the hold-up here at the postal services due to the railway strike. Maybe these are lost altogether, or they may arrive in time for H.H.'s return which I understand to be about the first of June.

Particularly we have been grateful for the talk about poverty. On the subtle and causal levels it enables the Param-Atman to live in the soul (Antahkarana of the devotee) and also about suffering being a kind of debt which we can only repay by bearing it bravely and happily.

So we have plenty to try to put into practice whether the other letters arrive or not. Thank you also for your illuminating remarks and I enclose a further cheque for postage.

Yours sincerely,
F.C.R.

28 April 1972

London

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 Abhankar the nearest to it?

1 May 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

I want to show the enclosed to the Shankaracharya quite privately so that no one else, even Mr. Jaiswal, knows about it. It is very important since the writer says, "So far as I know, everyone in this branch of the School who is meditating in London, New York, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand are now meditating on the double syllable word 'Rama'. I have noticed the following effects of meditating with this word:

1. It tends to give a brightness to the mind which although beneficial in breaking up dream substance does tend to keep the repetition of the Mantra superficial.
2. The Mantra cannot be drawn out into its finer states for the extra syllable produces a jerky effect."

H.H. knows the name of Mr. MacLaren who is Mr. Jaiswal's teacher. My personal relation with him is now much better since I gave him the material about Param-Atman.

I should like an answer to these questions as soon as you can get it.

Yours sincerely,
F.C.R.

Enclosure (overleaf)