

Correspondence

12 November 1972

Allahabad

Dear Dr. Roles,

I am happy to hear from you soon on your return home and hope Mrs. Roles and you had a comfortable return journey after enjoying your visit to the Taj at Agra. My son has also returned from Italy, with two boxfuls of nice things.

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

1. H.H. very much liked the remarks by St. John White and Dr. P. Fenwick's question that, "When things go wrong inside the School here and sometimes outside, it is frequently a question of who is doing it". He observed that our past Samskaras and the six inner enemies, i.e. Kama (Desire) Krodha (Anger), Lobh (Greed), Madh (Vanity), etc. make things go wrong. Blame should not be thrown on God, thinking that He motivated everything that happened. As explained in Gita, Kama creates a lot of Rajoguna, which, in turn does so much mischief.

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

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

4. "You can offer your actions and thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent".

H.H. is emphatic that only good actions should be offered to God, and as regards bad actions, we must always regret them and pray to Him to be forgiven for them. Param-Atman is not the fount of any bad actions. His actions are good and orderly and this is why an order prevails in the universe. If He could ever initiate a wrong action, the cosmos would immediately lapse into chaos. Wrong actions originate as explained under (1) above. We must, however, bear in mind that the very same action can be good in one situation and bad in another.

5. "The fire does not refuse to burn dirty linen". True but the question hardly arises as soiled clothes are just sent to the laundry. We do not take the trouble of consigning them to the fire.

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

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

attempts for a peaceful settlement.

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

H.H. liked your concluding remarks.

With warm greetings from all of us to you and Mrs. Roles.

Yours sincerely,

Rlal Dixit.

P.S. I have not sent any replies to Mr. Rabeneck, thinking that your questions covered his as well.

19 November 1972

Allahabad

Dandi Swami Bhagwat-Ananda Saraswati.

Dear Dr. Roles,

Your kind letter dated the 24th October was redirected from Allahabad to my present address and was received by me a few days back. I am sorry that I could not send you a prompt reply due to heavy engagements here.

Man is only an instrument in the hand of God which (is) the Self of All and everybody has, therefore, to play his individual rôle in this eternal drama according to His inexorable Will and promptings. If we remember this truth constantly in mind, we may be free from the most indomitable enemy in our spiritual progress—the Ego, which remains as a dark covering of the Param Atman (Pure Consciousness) within us so long as it is allowed to act in its own way of Ignorance. Therefore, all praise and admiration expressed in your letter must be due to God (the eternal prompter) who prompted this body to answer the questions to your satisfaction.

By nature I like solitude and try to be away from the turmoils of the congregational life, but people, due to love and reverence for me, drag me forcibly to various functions from time to time. I do not feel sorry for it because it is all predestined. After attending the Conference of the Mahatmas of which I was elected as the President I had to come to Dhampur which is about 700 kilometres from Allahabad to preside over a meeting of the most erudite Sanskrit Scholars of India. Both the conferences were a great success. I propose to go back to Allahabad by the end of this month. From the 23rd December to 31st December 1972 I shall have to preside over a great Vedanta Conference at Bihar in which not only the eminent Saints of India but also the reputed scholars from other parts of the world are likely to participate. During January and February 1973 I shall stay at Allahabad. My programme from March onwards is rather uncertain. In any case, you may write to me at any time you like on spiritual questions of technical or non-technical nature and I shall try to satisfy you on those points with the best of my ability. It may be that while I am on tour there may be some delay in sending reply to your questions for obvious reasons.

You may write always to me c/o The Shankaracharya Asram in Allahabad. My letters are not opened by anybody there except myself. All letters meant for me are received by my personal attendant there and re-directed to me when I am on tour, whenever necessary. Only you should mention my full name on the cover of the letter.

Hope this will find you all in the best of health and spirits.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Dandi Swami Bhagwat-Ananda Saraswati.

21 November 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

I was very happy to receive your letter of the 12th which arrived this morning and I am most grateful for the comments you obtained from H.H. which directly answer most of the doubts expressed by our people here when they heard quotations from Dandi Swami.

If you get a chance, I would like you to convey to H.H. that I have had grateful letters from New Zealand and other countries as well as people in London for some of the things Dandi Swami said which corresponded closely with what he himself had been saying in his private talks with us.

I gather from his comments that he would not be in favour of my trying to continue the correspondence with the Swami although I would be quite ready to do so in order to save some of H.H.'s own time and energy.

Yours sincerely,

F.C.R.

22 November 1972

London

Dear Mr. Dixit,

The quotations H.H. has had (*Reading 3*) are practically all that we have used so far from Dandi Swami. Until the end of this year all the groups here in London and also in other countries will be learning and discussing only the Shankaracharya's replies to the questions we asked him.

Yesterday, however, we held a big meeting to which anyone who had been given the meditation (whether recently or in the past) was invited. Several hundreds came because they had heard we had just come back from India; they were all anxious to hear anything which would improve their meditation. Enclosed is the paper which Mr Allan and I read to them; it includes two items which we learned from Dandi Swami and which we had immediately accepted as true. The people were full of joy at hearing H.H.'s words and we hope this meeting conveyed a little of his spiritual influence, and that my interpretation of his story is not mistaken.

This, with the other answers given by H.H. last month, are going to Mr. Rabeneck in New York together with Dandi Swami's answers to his own questions about Laghu-Vakya-Vritti.

Yours sincerely,

F.C.R.

72/3 encl.

4 December 1972

Allahabad

Dear Dr. Roles,

I have received your letters of 21st and 22nd November. H.H. however, was here only yesterday and when I went to see him this morning I was told that he had gone out again. Your message, therefore, could not be conveyed to him and I shall do so at the next opportunity. I am told that he is unlikely to return before a fortnight.

When I saw him last with your previous letter he did not give me any hint as to whether he was in favour of

your trying to continue the correspondence with the Dandi Swami. Perhaps, you could try either of them.

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

It is good to know that the colour transparencies you took of us came out rather well, and that you propose to send their enlargements when ready. Of course, I shall look forward to receiving them so that we may see how we look. We can see others, but not our own selves!

Yours sincerely,
Rlal Dixit.

*18 December 1972
Allahabad*

Dear Dr. Roles,

H.H. has been out since I wrote to you last. But I am told that he is due to come back to Allahabad in a few days from now.

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

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

Yours sincerely,
Rlal Dixit.

*29 January 1973
Allahabad*

Dear Dr. Roles,

H.H. had fixed today’s date for looking into your letters of 31st December and 10th January. Here are the replies.

31 December

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

10 January

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

I take you to be Vibhishana, and not Ravana.

Your letter dated 16th January and another from Mr. Rabeneck arrived on 27th. H.H. has asked me to bring them up after 3rd February when Mela rush decreases. I have been attending his Mela discourses off and on and taking notes for you. But let me attend a few more to judge which ones are more likely to interest Western audiences in addition to the predominantly Hindu audiences of the Mela.

With best wishes and regards,

Yours sincerely,

Rlal Dixit.

28 January 1973

Allahabad

Mela

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 January 1973

Allahabad

Mela Talk

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

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

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

Mela Talk

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

The real cause of failures is not the inadequacy of means, but an inadequacy of determination. Provided the determination is strong enough, even small things can achieve great results, because on seeing the un-bendability of determination, the heart of God melts and He Himself comes to our help.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then Krishna showed himself to the Arya Samajist in a dream, but he denounced him in the dream and told him that he recognized no Krishna at all. When he woke up, he saw a vision of Krishna before his eyes. He turned his head away from it, but in whichever direction he looked he saw the same vision.

This sent him out of his wits. Telling all this to the devotee, he apologised to him for his previous conduct.

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

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

1. The first stage is good actions, which lead to:
2. The second stage, which is good thoughts.
3. Good thoughts lead to the third stage, which is decrease in bad thoughts.
4. Decrease in bad thoughts leads to the fourth stage, which is Satoguna.
5. Satoguna leads to the fifth stage, which is decrease in worldly attractions.
6. Decrease in worldly attractions leads to the sixth stage, which is giving up worldly objectives.
7. Giving up of worldly objectives leads to the seventh and final stage, which is freedom from all thoughts about one's own self, and one's personal benefit.

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

Questions of procedure should be answered in the language of procedure. Questions relating to prayer should be answered in the language of prayer. Those relating to Vedanta should be answered in the language of Vedanta. Otherwise they would amount to offering a thing which is not needed actually. It would be something like offering food to one who is not hungry, or water to one who is not thirsty. As regards the method of approach through prayer, procedural errors can be forgiven in it. But this is not an ideal, not even a rule.

29 January 1973

Allahabad

Mela Talk

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

The two identities, of the fundamental Param-Atman and the fundamental energy, though going by separate names and allotted different attributes as a matter of convenience, are intrinsically inseparable from each other. Thus Rama and Sita, though different, are yet the same. And all that is attributed to Rama in the story of Rama

and Sita is done by Sita, because without energy work cannot be done. Actually, it is only the display of energy that can introduce us to the possessor of energy—the Param-Atman. Thus energy attracts us towards the presence of Param-Atman. This is what goes in the Upanishads by the name of Brahma-Vidya, the Divine Knowledge.

People possessing knowledge sometimes become too much obsessed with it and begin to feel a pride of superiority, even condemning Bhakti (devotional way). This is misuse of knowledge. Pride, too, has a place in our lives and we may all possess it, but of course using it only to prevent ourselves from stooping low into undignified tendencies. So also has the Individual ego (Ahankara)* a place in our lives and its use is that of an incentive to duty. For example, the Ahankara of being a policeman should impel a policeman to perform his duties with all the dignity of his rank!

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

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

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

When Krishna was leaving after the war, all others asked for this or that favour. When the turn of Kunti came, she said, "Give me some adversity or other to remain with me all the time." "But why adversity?" "Because in the past I always thought of You and brought You near me whenever there was adversity, and never when there was none."

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

3 February 1973

Allahabad

Mela Talk

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

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

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

This has a deeper meaning. Indeed, every one of us is unique—having no equal anywhere in the world. Still, it has become fashionable now-a-days to talk of equality. But can you find equality anywhere in the vast field of creation? World means nothing but variety, and variety means nothing but the existence of differences. If these differences, the differences between one thing and another disappear, then the whole world would disappear as it does in the state of dreamless sleep.

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

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

For example, the Prince of Tehri once met Swami Ram Tirtha and asked him, “Swami Ji, can you show God to me?” “Yes. But before I do that, can you tell me exactly what you are? Are you the body I see, or something else?” “Oh, I don’t know.” “Well, when you are so ignorant that you do not know even who you are, who can show you the Great God?”

3 February 1973

Allahabad

Alopi Bagh Ashram

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

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

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

This cannot be the case with a person who identifies himself with his actions. If anyone thinks he has won a victory today, the Law of Karma lays down that he would suffer a defeat tomorrow. It is said that when evils are absent, we meet Param-Atman. This may not always be true.

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

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

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

An old woman lived in a village. It was winter and a cat died in her house. She thought that if she threw it away in daytime, she would have to take a bath afterwards as otherwise her neighbours would regard her as unclean. So she waited till night. When everybody was fast asleep, she quietly went to the river a little distance away and threw it into the water. By the time she got back home a sick camel had strayed into her courtyard and died there. Now the carcass needed several strong men to drag it out. Therefore the whole village came to know of it and the old woman could not avoid a bath. Something similar applies to renunciation and involvement.

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

4 February 1973

Allahabad

Alopi Bagh Ashram

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He replied, “All right, I am wasting two hours. But you are wasting the other twenty-two hours as well!”

9 February 1973

Allahabad

Alopi Bagh Ashram

All living beings seem to be ‘praying’ for something or other. Some pray for wealth, some for health, some for property, some for fame, some for greatness, some for freedom from troubles, some for food, and so on. Moreover, all want these things on a permanent basis. Nobody wants temporary cure or temporary riches. Also, we want these things in a full measure and nothing which is less than full, our object being to make and keep ourselves full in all respects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 February 1973

Allahabad

Alopi Bagh Ashram

If we do not see Param-Atman everywhere in the vast field of creation and do not enjoy its sweetness and are not filled with joy by it then we really see nothing at all. Then our practice lacks in weight.

So Param-Atman is in everything. Let your heart be filled with joy on seeing how Param Atman manifests in everything. Then if Param-Atman lives in your whole vision, He also lives in your heart.

A housewife stood at her door looking her best in an attractive costume and make-up, waiting to receive her husband back home from work. A Mahatma passed that way and he fixed his eyes on her. There was a volley of protests that a Mahatma should be the last person to stare at women. Some even threatened to lynch him. The Mahatma said, “I am only admiring the art and the beauty of God’s creation. I have nothing in common with you, who call yourselves men or women, though you are made of the same flesh and blood in each case.” And he walked away.

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

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

There are two kinds of worlds, soft and hard. Similarly there are men, soft and hard. Those who are soft in nature will benefit from belief, while those who are hard in nature will benefit from thought. Believers would ordinarily shun thinkers and vice versa. But both can attain fullness—if they can be brought to co-existence in a group they are good for each other.

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

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

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

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