

## *Monday 9 January—Evening*

### *Conversation with Sri Narayan Swaroop at Hotel Yatrik*

N.S. I belong to the devotional side, which is Bhakti.

*N.G.H. I believe you were a disciple of Guru Deva?*

N.S. Actually, I took my initiation with him a couple of months before the present Shankaracharya took over. I retired from public service in 1967 and since then I have been very frequently with Maharji—the present Shankaracharya.

*B.R.H. His Holiness seems to deal with people who are on any Way—whether it is Bhakti, Jnana etc.*

N.S. It is for him to assess what stage the disciple is; whether he is intellectual, emotional etc.

*B.R.H. Does he ever speak, here, of what we refer to as 'the Fourth way', the Way of the Householder?*

N.S. Yes, the way of devotion or emotion, is easier for the Householder. I am a householder myself. The Way of Bhakti is the way of the householder.

*N.G.H. His Holiness spoke about the time and place being able to be calculated by astrology; is there anyone here who is versed in this and could teach it? We have some people in New Zealand who have a good understanding of Western astrology and would like to learn Indian astrology; is there anyone they could correspond with?*

N.S. Our Lawyer friend, Sri Tripathi, is very good on astrology and he would be able to help you.

*B.R.H. We have a place in the country which belongs to our group. It is a large house—small groups of people go up there for a week-end sometimes, to meditate together in the mornings and evenings. We have had this place for about ten years now and it is lovely and quiet.*

N.S. Could you tell me if the place is west of Wellington, or east?

*B.R.H. Mostly north!*

N.S. His Holiness was only today telling me that Tuesday is a bad day for going north! Here in this part of the country Tuesday is a bad day to go north, but Thursday is a very good day. His Holiness does not travel unless he knows beforehand whether or not it is good to travel. I myself need to know this so I can organise his trips.

*N.G.H. I am very interested in the daily programme at the Ashram.*

N.S. Everyone in the Ashram arises at 4 a.m. and each does his practice of Sadhana from the time of arising until about 8 a.m. We mostly do meditation and study of the scriptures. During this time we bath. Then, you recall what His Holiness said today about Brahma Muhurta—the hour and a half in the morning before sunrise.

The best time for Meditation—that's known as Brahma Muhurta—Muhurta means auspicious time. Brahma means time for special things. We meditate for about half an hour; after that we answer the call of nature, wash and all that, then come back to our own room. In this Ashram we have got a communal bathroom and ablution area. When we come back to our room we start our programme; everyone has his own programme. The programme is not actually prepared by His Holiness but it is under his guidance. One prepares one's own programme but in consultation. We finish our programmes about 8 a.m.

Everyone starts doing his own work; we also have a Sanskrit school here, where the students go for their

studies and the teachers start their own work. I, as a disciple, am required to be in attendance on His Holiness. Whatever work he gives me I try to do. Sometimes correspondence has to be attended to, sometimes banking has to be attended to, or travel arrangements. After that the midday meal comes and His Holiness takes some rest after that. After this time we are free.

*R.M. What are some of the things that the other disciples at the Ashram do?*

N.S. Different jobs. For example some have to arrange for this Margh Mela—a lot of work has to be done in that connection. One person is in charge of that job. There are six teachers who do their jobs, they stay in the Ashram. The Sannyasis are independent. They have of course to do their own meditation, nobody bothers them; they don't have to do any set work. They have their own room.

After five we start the evening prayers and our individual prayers finish about 6.30. There is a temple here, which you might have seen, dedicated to the original Shankara, and the last Shankaracharya, Guru Deva; we gather there and offer prayers as a congregation, then at about 6.45 we disperse from there. At 7.00 or 7.15 we start evening Satsang, chanting etc. This finishes about 7.45 p.m.

**Note.** We attended this evening's Satsang, and this is how we found it.

This evening we arrived at the Ashram about 7.15 and went straight up to the balcony that leads to His Holiness' audience room. There were only a few musicians gathered in front of H.H. so far, so we waited outside for a few minutes listening to the drummer testing his drums and improvising a little, until a young Sannyasi came across the courtyard—a very striking young man with a thick black beard and wearing the brilliant saffron robe. He beckoned us into the room. He sat down beside the drummer adjusting a microphone on a stand in front of him, and striking a few of the keys in a sort of box organ on the floor beside him.

We sat cross legged on a mat against the wall, facing His Holiness and Brigit sat down beside the other women sitting to his left; but at H.H.'s request, one of the musicians indicated that she should sit on the rug beside Ross. The tape recorder was, of course, just in front of us facing His Holiness and a few feet in front of that again were the musicians; His Holiness on his couch above them and the little altar with its offerings of fruit and flowers directly at the foot of the couch, so that the drummer had his drums almost touching the altar.

Gradually the room became full—young boys, students at the Ashram came in, variously robed; some took up other instruments, like small hand cymbals, and some sort of brass castanets. There was, high up on the wall above the entrance, an outside microphone which occasionally crackled loudly. The young Sannyasi began the invocation, in which the names of His Holiness could be recognised and then after a few trial notes on the little organ in front of him he began the first chant, the rest of the congregation by this time including older Sannyasis, several women, quite a few visitors and several more Ashram students, all joined in the repetitive refrain of the chant. For some reason—it must have been thought that our tape recorder needed to have clear path to the music—many of the men or boys who quite automatically, after making their obeisance to H.H. moved to sit towards the left, between us and the musicians—were hurriedly ushered or beckoned away from the recorder and shown that they must sit to the right or over in the far corner around behind H.H. The chant filled me with happiness. There were three chants—each lasting about 10 or 12 minutes and in each, at a particular point, one suddenly became aware of something else entering—something pervasive and extremely subtle—and from that point the rhythm began to change and, as it steadily picked up, so the enthusiasm and vigour in the chanting increased, so that when suddenly it stopped, the impact of the brief pause following was very powerful indeed; at a signal from His Holiness the singing stopped and a young man started chanting the Sanskrit from the Ramayana; after each verse he translated it into Hindi, again all with great gusto.

After approximately 20 minutes His Holiness glanced at his watch and instantly the pundit stopped his recital. The microphone was re-adjusted to within a few inches of His Holiness and then he spoke for about half an hour on the text. From what Agrawal had said and what I could gather myself, it was about the exploits of Hanuman in his searchings for Sita in Sri Lanka, from the life of Rama. I asked His Holiness the significance of some of the leading characters in the story and he said Rama symbolised Atman, Sita peace and Hanuman stood for the process of Viveka.

By this time sitting cross legged on the floor, albeit on two or three layers of rugs, was beginning to tell, so that when the Satsang finished at 9 o'clock and the congregation began to disperse, it was very good indeed to stretch one's legs on the balcony outside!

However, despite the physical discomfort, I think we all felt surprisingly invigorated, especially as we had had nothing to eat since lunch, 8 hours since!

*Conversation continues:*

N.S. These days, there is a pundit who is reciting from the Ramayana during evening Satsang. It is in Sanskrit and he is translating it into Hindi. He finishes at about 8.15 and then the Shankaracharya speaks for about half an hour. These days he is giving us about the doings of Hanuman. Hanuman was the mainstay of Rama and he was sent to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to search for Sita.

R.M. *Would you like to have some lunch?*

N.S. No, thank you, I am lucky in that His Holiness himself gives me my food. There is no one else in the Ashram who has this privilege.

B.R.H. *We are most impressed with His Holiness's presence in the audience room—the way he answers the questions—there is no sifting through his knowledge, no 'forethought'.*

N.S. Whatever may be the question—anything!

B.R.H. *And he uses illustrations which we might use in our own life.*

N.S. This is all because of what we call (?). It is because of his sacrifice. It is not exactly sacrifice. He has to do a lot of exercise—mental exercise for attaining that position. I am surprised at how any quotation from any scripture or book and he is able to understand it! Sanskrit is the most perfect grammar in the world—this grammar is the product of an instrument which was played by the Lord Shiva; that instrument is called Damaroot.

N.G.H. *Tell me, in the Ashram there seem to be different levels, when young people come there, searching for truth or God, can they just come there for a room, or how do they come to his Ashram, those who want to follow him as a Guru?*

N.S. People do approach him for this purpose but he decides who is fit to be taken into the Ashram.

There was a case with Guru Deva. A young man came to take initiation but he was refused and told to go home to his people. After about a week his father came along and said, "My son has come along and wants to desert us"—and he said, "Yes, I know, and I have refused."

It is His Holiness who decides whether he is a fit person to be taken into his Ashram or not.

There are three stages in which a person takes initiation—Brahmacharya, Grihasthya (householder) and Vanaprastha, which is a stage between Householder and Sannyasi. He is permitted to stay with his family but has no connections with them.

Generally, for the Householder, he gives meditation and they go back to their homes.

When one is initiated the entire burden of leading that person to the ultimate goal is taken over by the Guru. He is entirely responsible. The previous Guru Deva used to say, “I will not accept my own liberation until I have liberated all those whom I have initiated.”

I must say that you are lucky at getting an audience—it’s not because I belong to that Ashram—I know how people in India are eager and seek him wherever he goes. Nobody seeks to touch my feet!—but wherever he goes you can’t imagine the number of people wanting to do this! There must be something—some power which he has and I don’t have—physiologically he is the same flesh and bones as I am!

*R.M. When His Holiness accepts someone as a Householder and initiates them, what does he actually do besides the Meditation—what other things are the Householder expected to do?*

N.S. A friend of mine is a lawyer (I also practised law for some time). He wanted to take initiation but he was afraid he might be asked to do something which he would not be able to do. He was rather hesitant but he came along and I introduced him to His Holiness. He said there was nothing extra. Do whatever you are doing but make sure you do not do any evil things that you have not been doing so far. Don’t get into bad habits hereafter; whatever you have been doing you may continue. He explained further that the force of the mantra puts a stop to the fresh entry of evils. The ones which are already there will slowly disappear. Just as a thief enters into house, the first thing you have to do is lock your door, so that fresh thieves will not come in, so that those who are inside we will then be able to catch.

Actually Lord Sri Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, said the same thing. He has said that you don’t have to change—you stay where you are and progress from there.

*N.G.H. So the Sannyasis live at the Ashram?*

N.S. Only if they want to—otherwise there is no compulsion. They can take Sannyasa and go wherever they want to and come back to H.H. for guidance whenever they feel like it. That’s why His Holiness said today that you don’t have to feel the presence of Param-Atman all the time, or keep on continually remembering the Param Atman. If you do it once then the power that is generated by that one repetition will last throughout the day. If you do this it automatically comes to mind.

*N.G.H. What distinguishes (with the Sannyasis), their rank?*

N.S. It is closeness to Shankaracharya.

*N.G.H. I remember his Holiness saying that the chair of Shankaracharya is usually only filled for 12 years, but said he had already been in it for longer. Can we hope to have him around for a little longer?*

N.S. If I can give you a secret, he is considering that point; he is concentrating on it at the moment.

*N.G.H. Would someone take his place?*

N.S. Yes, when the change will come, I can’t say. He is actively thinking of it.

*N.G.H. What will he do then?*

N.S. He will retire into the Himalayas or to some quiet place and do what he was doing before coming to this place.

## Tuesday 10 January

### Message from J. Channing-Pearce

*Through Mr. Howitt, many our group here in Auckland offer our grateful thanks to His Holiness for the guidance and love that we have received from him since we met. His Holiness' last words to me spoke of him exercising his subtle power to further our work. His presence, this power and the memory of his words have been a source of great strength and continued hope to our members, both those who have recently joined and those who have been with the group for some time.*

*J.C.P. The advice from His Holiness regarding the unblocking of the flow of love has been of very great value to us all, but this obstruction still seems to exist with some people. It appears as if this obstruction has to do with the weakness of the desire to put His Holiness' words into practice, not just once or twice, but on a continual basis. The desire for the work does exist, but this turning away from the work is also strong. It would seem as if there is a battle going on between the two sides and this is causing tensions and troubles, and sometimes great emotional difficulties. Can His Holiness give us some guidance in this?*

H.H. Just as, when we are on the telephone, both the parties are connected via the telephone receiver, sometimes there is some atmospheric disturbance which is reflected in the earphone of the telephone; similarly, although the flow of blessing and the desire on the part of the Guru, and the keenness of the disciples is there, and they have faith and respect for the Guru all right, and the flow is constant, yet because of Rajas at times there is some disturbance; but this should not be a cause of worry. Constant practice would enable this to lessen in due course. This disturbance will be eliminated.

*N.G.H. I think Mr. Channing-Pearce's fear is that with so many of his people the pull of worldly things is producing one pole and the pull of the spiritual is producing the other, and he is concerned about how that can be resolved.*

H.H. Now, as regards the duality to which Mr. Channing-Pearce refers, I must point out that he need not be afraid of the worldly pull. This is what your people should do while they are engaged in their worldly affairs;—they should do them to the best of their ability, they should attend to whatever calls to the best of their ability, and after having finished it, they should revert to their spiritual part; then they should try to devote themselves entirely to that aspect. When we do this the Rajas, which is the cause of that obstruction, will tend to be subdued and with this the feeling of obstruction will be lessened. In this way, in due course of time, the difficulty will disappear.

*N.G.H. We would like to thank His Holiness for the privilege of allowing us to attend Satsang at the Ashram last evening. I have been very aware each time I have visited the Ashram of the underlying happiness and joy that pervades the place. Last evening I found the chanting of the musicians warmed the heart, stilled the body and the Manas. It helped one connect with an underlying substance in which there is no movement. Everything was an expression of this substance. There was a witness that was not moved, even by this great joy. His Holiness was the centre around which everything moved.*

*Can there be levels of Satsang? If so, could His Holiness explain them?*

H.H. Yes; there are many levels of Satsang. They differ according to the different people who assemble to do the Satsang. There is a difference in people of nature, of habits, ways of living, ways of thinking, status, or their level of achievement in the spiritual world, and so, accordingly there are different types of Satsang. All Satsang does not mean the chanting of Shlokas as you heard yesterday. Meditation would be one form of Satsang.

Listening to the epic would be another, chanting itself another, listening to the Teachings would be a fourth type, and even doing service would be a Satsang—service to the invalid, the disabled, that could also form a type of Satsang.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna has described eighteen methods by which one can establish contact with the Almighty. Even weeping can form a Yoga, weeping in the memory of God. Similarly, doing work, everything can become a Yoga if it leads to your establishing a connection with the Almighty; the basic idea of Satsang is that a connection should be established with the Ultimate.

*N.G.H. I found His Holiness' answer yesterday about Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi easy to understand and very helpful. I would like to ask some further questions which will help me in guiding others who are meditating in New Zealand. There is a stage in Meditation where the body is absolutely still, Manas has quietened down, and the Mantra has a rhythm where each repetition brings joy. At this stage should the meditator repeat the Mantra consciously, or just allow it to repeat of itself?—that is just follow the Mantra?*

H.H. The object of repeating it consciously is that the consciousness may go inside, and the best thing is that it should be repeated automatically from inside.

*N.G.H. Some people speak of how, with the loss of the feeling of the body, the Mantra seems to have no limits and is sounding everywhere. What is happening here?*

H.H. One should not try to understand what is happening at that time, because if one makes an effort to understand it, then the depth of Meditation will be disturbed. They should not be concerned with what is happening there, they should be meditating and enjoying what is happening in Meditation. There should be no disturbance in the Antahkarana.

*N.G.H. May I ask here if His Holiness could just say what Rama, Hanuman and Sita represent in the story of Ramayana, as we heard in Satsang last evening?*

H.H. Rama represents Atman, Sita represents peace and Hanuman represents discretion, discrimination, (Viveka). So that with the help of discrimination (Viveka) Atman is able to find peace.

*N.G.H. Yesterday we were honoured with a visit at the Yatrik Hotel from Narayan Swaroop. He helped me to understand many things. We were impressed with the depth of his devotion to the Shankaracharya. He explained his way was Bhakti. He also explained how he was a householder and he gave us some beautiful stories which clarified a lot about the Way of the Householder. From conversation with him further questions have arisen which I would like to put to His Holiness.*

*From what Agrawal said, a householder received his initiation, then returned to his home, going about his business in his normal way. He is not expected to change his way of life, except not to gain any fresh bad habits. The force of the Mantra will stop entry of new evils and dissolve old ones in time.*

H.H. I would like to add to what Sri Narayan said yesterday: the basic meaning of the initiation is to establish connection of the Jiva with the Param-Atman. The Guru who is initiating is only a medium. Through the mantra which he gives he enables the disciple to establish a connection directly with the Lord. Thereafter he is expected to remember and repeat the Mantra given to him and do the Dhyana, so that the connection which has been established strengthens and catches root. Whatever he eats after being initiated he should think that it is a gift. Just as when you visit here you offer some fruit, and afterwards His Holiness gives you some 'Prasad'—the gift—this is not an offering.

After we have received the initiation, whatever we do, we do it with complete surrender to the Almighty,

whatever we receive after we have been initiated, for our own use, we should understand it as Prasad—a return from the Almighty. We must carry the idea that we own nothing, everything has become God's; we are using everything with His permission and not as owner of it. This helps in the destruction of the ego of the Vyashti—the destruction of the individual's ego—Ahankar. When Vyashti Ahankar is destroyed, then the pure Aham, the realisation of Self, develops.

*N.G.H. This sounds very much like Bhakti.*

H.H. Yes, this is Bhakti. This also leads to the Oneness of the Vyashti with the Samashti. In other words you can say the destruction of evil paves the way to the Almighty.

*N.G.H. Is it the evil tendencies in the Samskar that are dissolved?*

H.H. This is the beauty of surrendering, that all samskaras get destroyed and you become one with the Almighty. Samskaras are of two types; good or bad; the surrender helps in combating the bad samskaras and the good samskaras help in becoming one with the Almighty.

*N.G.H. This has cleared up a point, because for a long time in the West it was thought that samskaras were all bad. This is helpful. A man on the way of the Householder must also by nature tend to be predominantly intellectual, emotional, or active. General knowledge must benefit these different types of people, but will they not need different Sadhanas?*

H.H. There are two kinds of Sadhanas—one is general, applicable to all; others are individual—they will differ from person to person, according to their place of living, to the society to which they belong, and all that.

*N.G.H. I ask that question because with the people in the group back in New Zealand one was wondering if there were any signs or indications by which one can tell whether a person is intellectual or emotional?*

H.H. Those who are critics, that is, critical in their approach, are intellectual. They need the Jnana, intellectual teaching. Those who are emotional belong to Bhakti. Those who are sort of indifferent, not particularly intelligent or emotional—active (karma)—need to do something in order to get along the spiritual path. In our country they have to do worship, go to the temple and that sort of thing. But those who feel intensely, they come under emotion, Bhakti, while those whose approach is critical, their approach is Jnana, reason.

*N.G.H. What are the particular obstacles to the intellectual person and the emotional person that one should watch out for?*

H.H. In Bhakti one should be very careful that there should be nothing to disturb faith; in Jnana one has to be careful that one is honest about what he is thinking and saying.

*B.R.H. When His Holiness was speaking earlier about offering one's actions, everything one has, to the Param-Atman, is this general to each of these types of people or is it particular to one?*

*N.S. I am grateful to you for this has cleared up one of my own questions.*

H.H. Surrender is necessary in all three, because unless you surrender you will not be able to get light even for intellectual understanding of things. Surrender is necessary for devotion and faith, of course.

Here is a story which will clarify the difference between Jnana and Bhakti.

Two artists entered a particular state and went to the king there and said, "We are artists and would

like to display our art; the beauty of our art is that both of us will depict the same thing.” The king said, “That is not very difficult, you will copy each other!” So they said, “Give us just one room, but partition it in the middle—one man will sketch in his part of the room, and the other man will sketch in the other part; and ultimately you will find that both of us will have done the same job.” Well, that was interesting and the king arranged it. A room was allotted and partitioned in the centre. One half was given to one artist, the other half to the other. After cleaning the wall the first artist started to sketch a very beautiful figure on the wall. The other man cleaned the wall—to do this he rubbed and rubbed and rubbed, polishing it so much that it started to reflect whatever was in front of it. Then the partition was removed and light was put on; and it was seen that the sketch made by one was reflected on the wall of the other! So there was similarity! The same thing could be seen.

Now, the one who sketched is a Bhakti, and the one who polished is a Jnana. In other words Jnana reflects the Ultimate—Param-Atman, while Bhakti creates the Param-Atman.

(Intellectual sees that there is nothing but God. Devotion sees God. Devotion sees God in everything.)

*B.R.H. Are they both two aspects of clarifying Buddhi?*

H.H. Buddhi is cleaned, and when the process of cleansing is perfected, then the Param-Atman is reflected.

*B.R.H. If one could take the analogy further—with Bhakti, can it be seen as the love of what is being sketched?*

H.H. Yes, love plays a part there. A Jnani considers that there is nothing except God. The approach of Bhakti is that everything is God.

(Referring to clock on wall)—The clock has stopped! It is experiencing Samadhi! (Laughter).

*R.M. I feel I have a general understanding of the difference in the functions of Buddhi, Manas, Chitta and Ahankara. It would help to further refine this understanding if His Holiness could confirm which part is functioning in the following four examples:*

*1. I receive an invitation to accompany Mr. Howitt on his visit to His Holiness. It is difficult to re-arrange my worldly activities to do so but I feel that I must take advantage of this rare opportunity, and decide to come. Is this decision made by Buddhi?*

H.H. Yes; decision is taken by Buddhi, but it is not the doing of Buddhi alone. In the background of this decision is your faith (Shraddha) that you will get something good by going there.

*2. I have to plan the journey to Allahabad—discover what aircraft are available, select the best route to take and how many days to arrive before hand so as to be recovered from the journey before the first audience. Is that step-by-step planning process carried out by Manas?*

H.H. Manas places the file before the Buddhi and Buddhi takes a decision. The associations are of two kinds, good and bad. If you happen to be associated with the evil side of things, then wrong decisions are made. Therefore when you get inspiration to do something, the decision is taken according to the association with which you are involved.

*3. I wish to ask His Holiness a question but cannot find the correct form in which to convey the meaning. After a great deal of thought the question is put aside for the time being. Later, whilst engaged in some simple routine task, the essence of the form of the question to ask is suddenly known. It arises as a direct intuitive perception. All that needs to be done then is to expand this seed into words. Is Chitta the function within which the seed of the solution arises?*



H.H. Yes, this is the function of the Chitta.

*R.M. In our second audience I spoke of a vision of His Holiness appearing during Dhyana. In what function of the Antahkarana did this manifest?*

H.H. This is the doing of the Chitta. The Chitta is just like a camera which has taken a photograph.

*N.G.H. Chitta seems to be a great storehouse where both good and bad things are filed away and if a man desires bad things he can keep on taking them out of the store or he can take out good things; is it like this?*

H.H. Yes, that is correct.

*B.R.H. We have a lady, Mrs. Shaw, in our group, who has a son, now eight years old. Since he was six he has been able to see light and colours surrounding people, animals, flowers and objects. Examples of what he sees are a white or very pale colour close to the body; around objects he sees only pale colours, but with people, animals, flowers, there are colours as well; these vary according to the mood, well-being or state of health of the person. When a person has a fright he sees sparks of colour emanating from the edges of their hands and fingers, dying down as they calm down. When he is very close to the body he sees lines which are streaks of light running to the tips of the fingers.*

*Could His Holiness explain what is being experienced by young Campbell Shaw?*

*On another occasion he saw a dead body three days in succession, following the custom of Maori funerals. He saw no colours about the corpse, but a full length replica of the bodily shape, about two feet above the physical body—it appeared as a pale shadow. Each day it diminished in size until it finally disappeared completely.*

*What was this?*

*The young boy accepted all these things as natural until he went to school, where he was disturbed to discover that other children were unable to see or understand what he saw; consequently he thought he was abnormal. I would be pleased to gain more knowledge and understanding to assist him to understand and cope with this.*

*Another difficulty he has is that colours are massed about on a page when he is reading, giving him a great deal of trouble. These blotches of colour hinder his reading. Is there any way I can help him with this?*

H.H. This is due to some of his previous doings—karmas—previous births. I do not know whether Mrs. Shaw believes in rebirth or not? (Yes) Then it can be explained to her that this is because of some of his doings, connections with previous births, and she need not be worried about it; in due course of time this will disappear. This colour business will stop, and his difficulty with reading also—this will stop.

*B.R.H. So he can be assured that, when he ceases to see such things, that is quite normal?*

*N.G.H. What is this light that he saw around things?*

H.H. It is connected with his previous doings—previous birth, it has nothing to do with this particular birth, his present life, or surroundings. It was some experience from a previous birth which is being reflected here. It appears that in his previous birth he was handling or meddling with colours and that has persisted, and now he is experiencing all this colour business, but this will stop as he grows up.