

15 May 1978

### READING 3

Perhaps some of you have become interested enough in the ancient idea of Vyashti (the unit or 'atom') in relation to Samashti (the world composed of those atoms) to catch glimpses of a few of its implications. One needs to find one's own examples.

A bacteriologist puts a drop of pond water on a slide and looks at it through a microscope; under low power he sees a number of protozoa and larval forms; under high power, mobile bacteria; and to him those 'atoms of life' are in entirely random movement. He thinks and proclaims that the world is governed by chance and studied by probability equations. Were those bacteria and protozoa endowed with a consciousness at all like man's, each of them would regard his movements as purposeful, consider themselves as possessed of free will; regard unforeseen and unfavourable conditions like a drought as 'bad luck' or the 'devil'; and if they stopped to wonder how they got there, they would have to invent some 'God' or Samashti to account for the bacteriologist!

So all those terms beloved of philosophy and religion are merely relative to the observer; and the teaching on Cosmoeses tells us how there are successive worlds like that all through the universe related to each other in this Vyashti-Samashti fashion – a number of planets and their satellites within a solar system; of stars within a nebula or galaxy, and of galaxies within the observable universe. Looking at his own body a man sees the same succession of smaller and smaller worlds for which he himself is 'God'.

As H.H. said at the 1972 Religious Festival:

This body is like a big city, the habitation of many. It contains a whole world of living creatures inside it; they all possess life and the desire to live and reproduce. Some appear to us harmful, some useful and some essential to our life. What is it that keeps them constantly in a state of dynamic equilibrium when in health? Any disturbance of that equilibrium causes disease, and then compensating forces come into play which tend to set it right.

(Record, 29 January 1972)

**Comment:** Yes, what is it that keeps all that cell world in equilibrium? I certainly don't invent it or cause it to happen by will!

(Pause for *silent* contemplation of these questions!)

### PART 2. SOME IMPLICATIONS

a) *Two sets of laws.* The Shankaracharya points out that there are two sets of laws, one governing the individual organisms or men (Vyashti) and the other governing the world to which they belong (the pond – Samashti). One of us asked him how to understand this in relation to ourselves.

He replied:

It is a very vast field... this complexity arises from the power of choice which has been given to the Vyashti, particularly human beings.

(Record, 23 September 1975)

One can see many examples of this in the biological sciences, in the evolution of the whole biosphere (organic life on earth) and in the Darwinian principle of the 'survival of the fittest' which has such a big influence on the evolution of individual species.

One sees too that the scientist ascribes it all to chance or probability, tending to study it all according to the statistical law of large numbers. Whether he looks at the next world larger than himself – the biosphere – or whether he looks at the world next below him – the cells of the bodies like his – he sees a rather similar form of life. He distinguishes different 'species' of cell, and he realises that they all come originally from a single fertilised ovum and each cell divides into two. So, for the species of organic life he thinks in terms of Nature as Samashti, and for the cells *he* is Samashti (God) and the individual groups of cells as functioning units are Vyashti.

And those three worlds, the Biosphere, the human world, and the cell world, are all of the universe that man sees as having a life and intelligence at all comparable with his own. The scientist sees himself, of course, as the only conscious kind of Being in the Universe; have any of you seen this attitude as rather funny in view of the muddles which *Homo sapiens* keeps bringing on himself?

b) *Bond between unit and whole.* There is another implication which was discussed later at the same visit. There is a natural bond or 'marriage' between the Vyashti and the Samashti:

S. It is a common experience that after marriage there are occasions when friction arises between husband and wife but these disagreements are usually temporary; inside the heart of both there is desire for the welfare of the other. Similarly, one could say we as individuals (Vyashti) are married to the Param-Atman (Samashti). Param-Atman is calling to us all the time, and although the person (the Jiva) wants to go to the Param-Atman, yet that which prevents him doing so is only this – that the Jiva thinks 'I am also something'.

This causes a separation in the heart which is the obstacle to union... This does not mean that the determination does not still exist, however big the friction; we are always ready. The degree of separation depends on our state of mind, though its fickleness need not worry us unduly. The root cause of all this is the idea which sometimes takes root and assumes form – the idea that *I* am also something.

(Record, 27 September 1975)

It is worth keeping this passage in mind because it can prove to be of untold value. Since one recognised that fact, the mere repetition of the phrase 'There I go, thinking *I* am also something' has rescued one in countless situations!

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