

## *Wednesday 22 August*

*M.E.P. Just a point to clear up from yesterday. Those who have finished asking questions and are doing what they are told—still, in addition to the practice want to fuse it with their particular interest and particular activity. How is this best arranged? I think you have a word Loka Sangraha—world maintenance—should all energies be directed towards this?*

H.H. Those who have come to a stage where there are no questions, whatever they do is for the benefit of others, so that they do not get into the wrong track and as such, whatever they do they know they are not doing it for themselves. And they will neither get the disadvantage of doing that nor will they get the advantage of doing it. They will neither be bound by the result of those actions nor will they get any advantage out of them. They know that their action will not bind them—so there should be no difficulty in fusing—as there is no result to be achieved. They have already got liberation.

Loka Sangraha—solidarity or uplift of the world (Loka—world of names and forms).

*M.E.P. We have spoken of the importance of the knowledge of Brahma. His Holiness has also spoken of the importance of the love of Param Atman. Different people will have different tendencies. Can they—how can they share these with each other so that they come to the same result?*

H.H. Natures differ and they differ because of so many factors. The actions which one did in his previous life, all that has an effect in developing the present nature and habits also, of course, form the nature of the person so that they will continue to remain different, even where one is a realised person and has achieved the objective. Even then the effect of the previous nature will continue but that will not make any material difference, because the object, the final object, is the same so one need not bother about these minor differences and it's no use trying to bring them on one platform. Let them go according to their own nature, as long as only they are achieving it.

*M.E.P. There was a question from one lady about the way of devotion. What practice would be recommended for this way?*

H.H. Sentiments, feelings, they are the main pillars of devotion and they have to be developed. The more you start feeling the greater will be devotion. Ultimately you have to see your Deva-ista in everyone. You start feeling that everyone is the reflection of your object of devotion and everything is contained in your object of devotion. So these two things; The object of devotion is present in everyone and everyone is present in the object. This is the ultimate stage of devotion.

*M.E.P. Your choice of the object of devotion is obviously very important.*

H.H. Yes.

*M.E.P. Can this choice be directed; should it be directed?*

*N.S. I must acknowledge that I did not complete the answer. I read in your expression that you wanted to put a question and therefore I stopped short.*

His Holiness said, after explaining what ultimate devotion means, that everybody, according to his nature, will select his object of devotion. Nature's differ. Some people will attach themselves to Lord Krishna; others will start attaching themselves to Lord Rama. They do this according to their own liking. But, the method of

devotion that is seeing the object of devotion in everybody and seeing everybody in the object of devotion will be the same.

Ista—object of desire; the chosen idea. Devaista—the particular form of God that one is devoted to.

*M.E.P. Does that mean that whatever object that person chooses, according to his nature, it will be ultimate, absolute, for him?*

H.H. The object should be ideal. If not ideal then after some time one is apt to see faults and when one sees faults in the object of devotion then the affection, the devotion fades, so it is necessary that your object of devotion should be an ideal one from your point of view. There you will feel that everything is perfect, is perfection embodied, in other words you have to realise it is an embodiment of God. Even if it is not, you have to have that feeling for it, that it is perfection personified. So one has to have high ideals.

*M.E.P. As to the way of knowledge, His Holiness spoke of the knowledge of mango and said that you could only know mango—I see that if the meditation or contemplation is extended to the full, I am mango—this question is about the steps in between; how to take for example mango and how to increase one's appreciation for mango.*

H.H. The final stage of knowledge is where there are no images. It is yourself and the mango—the thing which you want to know—who are you? There is no difference between you and that, therefore, there are no two persons, no two identities only one identity, so that there are no 'in between' steps. When you have become the same thing then you do not exist at all. There is only one thing in existence—there can't be any steps in between.

According to our philosophy this body is made of five ingredients, similarly the cosmos is also built of five elements. Now our original Shankara said that the Cosmos and I actually is One. But One is in existence, that is, we see from the point of view of existence the substance is the same but actually the two things are different. So what Lord Shankaracharya said was that this is the same as that, in substance only, so as long as you keep I and you different, this difference between you and I, the object of Dhyana is not achieved. When knowledge is achieved then this difference between I and you disappears. There is no you, there is no I, there are no two things, both are the same. When you put the question that, "I have perceived that", then you are keeping your identity separate from that. So that would not arise when you had achieved that knowledge. There is no action—it is purely knowledge.

*M.E.P. I understand the concept of Advaita is fundamental, could we persuade His Holiness to say more about Advaita?*

N.S. His Holiness has developed the idea of Advaita. He says that the philosophy of Advaita is Cosmos and ourselves. What we call Param-Atman—Jiv-Atman. They are actually in substance One, in principle they are One but in practice they are two. In practice whatever we get we get from Cosmos because we are built as we are connected with them (elements). That's the basic principle of Advaita philosophy. Do you get it?

*M.E.P. Yes, It's very much a question of how to approach it. One questioner says—reason tells me that I am not separate from the Cosmos but experience gives a modest small answer and so much of lacking and so on and it is a question of the approach to resolve and bring together these two.*

N.S. That is true. His Holiness has just said there is—by reason we know but in practice we have to act as if there were two—otherwise there will be no dealings in the actual life, it will be difficult to have any dealings. Whatever we may be doing we should remember we are one. That's the instruction.

His Holiness has repeated what I said earlier. Yes, the knowledge is there but while we are practising, while we are dealing in life we do not remember, we forget what we are so it needs to be practised that we are, that is, we will be able to acquire as it were that knowledge. At present that knowledge remains knowledge only but we can introduce it into our dealings by remembering that fact.

His Holiness gives an illustration of a parable in our literature.

Lord Krishna had a friend Sudama. The friendship was of childhood and at one time Sudama ate some dhal which was actually meant for both of them. He ate up the share of Lord Krishna also, stealthily. As a result of this, there was great poverty and Sudama was deprived of worldly affluence. Then he was goaded by his wife to go and approach his old friend. He went there but he was so poverty stricken and so weak that he didn't have even the strength for going all the distance so he fell half conscious by the way. Lord Krishna Himself arranged his being brought to Him. When he arrived there, at the gates of Lord Krishna, the servants of Lord Krishna would not let him in, because Lord Krishna was living like a king and he was a poor man dressed in poverty. So at every step he was checked. Ultimately, when he did get in and he met his friend Krishna, then the two became one and they were very happy and Krishna worshipped His friend, honoured His friend. On seeing that their master honoured this visitor the servants also started to revere the person whom they were checking a little while ago.

Now this parable is a story of Param-Atman and Jiv-atman. Jiv-atman is the small fry, is weak, cannot get to the Param-Atman. He does depend on Param-Atman himself. Buddhi is wisdom, she is the wife in that story. The wife goads Sudama. The wisdom goads the Jiv-atman to go to the Param-Atman.

When he comes back in actual worldly affairs then he finds everything nice, everything arranged for him, servants started arranging things for the visitor when they knew he was the old friend of the master. Similarly, when the world will know of the meeting of Jiv-Atman with Param-Atman then he finds everything arranged.

*M.E.P. We have in this story both the knowledge and the devotion. The knowledge is the way of the wisdom of the wife and the devotion of the friendship of long standing.*

N.S. His Holiness says that this is the best essence which you have got. The product of meeting is knowledge and actual meaning is devotion.

*M.E.P. I see also in this story Moksha. Jiv-atman achieves the Moksha (salvation).*

H.H. The most important part is that after meeting one comes back to the affairs of the world in many modes.

Now in the case of Sattvic people—those who are inclined to be of a sat nature—they remember. Those who are of a Rajasic nature they do not remember. The remembering makes all the difference.

*M.E.P. Those who are of a Tamasic nature—what happens to them?*

H.H. In the case of the Tamasic their ego predominates. They do not remember at all the meeting with Param-Atman.

N.S. His Holiness says this meeting takes place in the life of everybody everyday (well if I most humbly supplement it, not every day every minutes). So. But in the case of those with a Tamasic nature their ego predominates and even when they get some recollection they try to forget it. In case of Rajasic natures, their memory is not so complete, they have got some faint recollection but that is not free of doubt but in the case of a Sattvic, their remembrance is complete, and, as and when there is an opportunity they are alive to that experience of being.

His Holiness wants to know if this is clear.

*M.E.P. Yes. One thing more remains. We spoke in the parable of the way of knowledge and the way of devotion. I am not sure I see in it also the way of action.*

H.H. Action is there, but as a part of devotion. It is submerged in devotion. When actions are performed with devotion then those actions achieve the sublime.

*M.E.P. So here the three ways become two!*

N.S. His Holiness says this activity takes you to the goal only when it is mingled with devotion. If it is devoid of devotion then the ego comes in and that takes you away from God rather than nearer to God. So action, the third part achieves its salvation only when it is mingled with devotion.

*M.E.P. And also with knowledge?*

H.H. In the Vedas, where the three paths are mentioned, it is meant that these actions come with it when mixed with devotion. Devoid of devotion they will not start a path leading to salvation.

### *Thursday 23 August*

*M.E.P. I am now trying to anticipate some of the questions I will be asked when I get back to England.*

*How shall we deal with the servants of Param-Atman who attempt to keep the Jiv-Atman at bay—and who are the servants?*

H.H. Your question has got two things. The servants, they are your intellect, Buddhi, Manas, the five senses which try to lead you astray and your ego. These are the main servants who will try to keep you away from meeting the Lord. The method of dealing with these servants is to keep control of them.

*M.E.P. So the habit of too much thinking still goes on and some sharper tool of practice please is needed?*

H.H. To sharpen the tool which you ask about, faith is the method and by faith we develop knowledge. Knowledge of the Supreme and of the fact that you are one with It. Thus His Holiness illustrates the point;

While the child of a rich person (is young), the servants play with him and even at times slap him, but when the child grows up and begins to feel that he is the heir to the estate and he will succeed to the household then the servants start to fear him and they do not dare to slap him at that stage.

H.H. Similarly, when a person remembers that he is one with God, is conscious of the relationship with the Lord, then the servants, namely the senses, the ego, they automatically come into control and less often lead the person astray.

*M.E.P. Is not one of the servants also Maya?*

H.H. Maya has three phases. One is that the Lord takes the help of Maya in creation. The Lord wants to play, he plays with the Maya and the whole world is created. Creation comes into existence. That's one way of it. That Maya, as it were, is a manifestation of the power, or the 'I' of the Supreme. The second phase is the Maya which keeps the human kind away from the Lord by deceiving, by taking a person away from his path, by giving false hopes, hopes of pleasures which do not exist (actually). So that is the second phase of Maya, which is different from the first phase. Then there is a third phase which is in between the two. This actually helps humanity to go towards the Supreme and that is through knowledge—Vidya. Knowledge about Maya helps the human nature to go towards (because of knowing) the Lord. That also is a phase of Maya. That's how His Holiness explains it, that Maya is not only a servant, as you wanted to know. In the first phase she is more a friend of the Lord, in the second phase she is more like a servant which is keeping people away from the Lord and in the third phase is for the both—servant who will lead the person to the Lord.



His Holiness further illustrates the point. He takes the illustration from Ramayana.

When the enthronement of Rama was announced to take place the next day then the Gods tried to influence the maid-servant, Manthara, and through her influence the Queen Kaikeyi to ask for the exile of Rama. This is the first phase, the Devamaya His Holiness calls it, changed the mind of Kaikeyi. So that's the first phase; the second phase is Kaikeyi through her efforts tries to show to Bharata the splendours of the kingdom and to take it and to sit as a king. This was the second phase to persuade Bharata by showing this spectacle. The third phase was, the Bharata went to Tamas, came back, ruled on behalf of Rama, not on his own behalf; so this is the third part of the Maya which links it with the first two. Contact with the Lord brings then all these things but with a different approach.

*M.E.P. So this third phase, the seeing or the knowledge of Maya is the important factor, so that knowing it you can use it?*

H.H. His Holiness confirms your view and further says that as Kaikeyi was poisoned by Manthara, the maid servant, then the same process was being adopted by Kaikeyi to poison Bharata—the brother of Rama.

Actually this was all the doing of the Gods, the Devamaya poisoned the minds of Manthara and Kaikeyi and the same Devamaya wanted, through Kaikeyi, to poison Bharata but Vasistha, the guru of Rama's brother, he took a stand saying, "Look here, you were successful in changing the mind of and improving the mind of Manthara and Kaikeyi but you cannot change or influence the mind of Bharata and if you succeeded therein then it will end in your own annihilation.

A person who has got respect, faith and knowledge will never go astray. The three things are essential for going in the right path.

Namely, Shraddha—respect, Vishvas—faith, Jnana—knowledge.

*M.E.P. Three aspects of Maya, would it be appropriate to relate them to the gunas, one to each?*

H.H. If you want to have a relationship between the two, then Tamaguna will be related to that Maya which is depicted in lack of knowledge. Rajaguna will be related to that Maya which consists in the splendour and Sattvaguna is the knowledge.

*M.E.P. So again we have stressed the importance of Sattvaguna and that was also in relation yesterday, to the returning into the manifest action, and it leads me on to ask about the knowledge of the man who has achieved the Brahma and came out into the manifest action, how that might be recognised and how it might be manifest, perhaps in the individual, perhaps in the company or in some way.*

*You see the common world, I think expect certain things but this is another illusion.*

H.H. Those who are around will not be able to know whether a person has realised the Lord, unless they themselves have realised. When they get the same stage of realisation then alone they will be able to know that this person is realised. His Holiness illustrates that only those persons who have studied and known English will be able to understand the language of an English speaking person. Similarly, a person who has himself realised, who has himself gone on that path will be able to know others who are realised.

*M.E.P. So the recognition would be by reflection? One to the other?*

N.S. His Holiness says there is another way also. Ignoring whether the development has achieved the ultimate or not, if others start having confidence and faith that that person has achieved, these other persons will be able to advance. In other words confidence and faith is another method of realisation.

*M.E.P. So, I think there is no demonstration to be made?*

H.H. His Holiness quotes the Gita. A question similar to yours was asked by Arjuna and Lord Krishna gave a reply. He said that a person who is realised, although in his dealings, his behaviour with other persons is the same, but there is some sort of speciality in the dealing of this person who is realised and that speciality is that, although others don't see it, he knows it's only theatrical acting, and knowing it is theatrical, his relationship is with God and through God with these people.

His Holiness says that a person who is acting on a stage, now the person who is well versed in it, the person who is realised, the actor who has learned his art, he performs his part in such a fashion that everybody gets fascinated by it but the person who did not get trained, who has not yet attained that art, when he does play the part, he will not be able to do it with the same efficiency, so there is a difference, but that difference is not being felt by those around, he knows the difference, he is conscious of the difference.

*M.E.P. Again, it appears that this knowledge brings a responsibility but not only to play the part as well as you have described but to care for the part, as it were, and not to do harm in the part—to have some choice in one's actions. That is an important question because sometimes we are asked to do, as Arjuna was asked to do, to kill his relations.*

*This comes back to "I like, I don't like". This just needs to be pressed home to make sure whether there is any choice in the part for the realised man.*

*N.S. Wonderful is his reply.*

H.H. His Holiness says that when Arjuna went to the battlefield he was activated by a desire to obtain the Kingdom. He wanted to fight to get back his Kingdom but when he saw his own relations, that desire disappeared. Now Lord Krishna said that both these things are wrong. To enter with a desire to fight for the purpose of obtaining the Kingdom was wrong and not to fight because it will be killing your kinsmen is also not right. The right thing is to, 'act as considering it as duty'. To kill for the Kingdom and not to kill because it is your kinsmen, both things are wrong. The right thing is to fight as though belonging to the Kshatriya (soldier) order, the warrior class. It's your duty to fight and therefore you fight.

A person who is realised should not indulge in any action for any motive—to gain an objective or to refrain from gaining an object but whatever he should do, he should just do, considering it to be his duty.

*M.E.P. So. One small question of terminology. What we have been discussing these two days. Is it all enshrined in the phrase Aham Brahmasmi—I am Brahma*

H.H. His Holiness says that, he explains the meaning of the phrase Aham Brahmasmi, as to where it should be applied and leaves it to you whether what we have been discussing can be covered in this phrase.

His Holiness says that Aham Brahmasmi is only to remind us what we are. Now if this phrase is uttered in relation to the spirit, soul, the Atman, then it is absolutely correct, but if this statement is pronounced in connection with other things like the body then it is not correct.

*M.E.P. I understand.*

H.H. His Holiness recollects an anecdote that took place in Lucknow some years ago. In India, in a certain part of the year, we perform a play of Rama and Krishna known as the Ramaleela. In that performance the entire story of Rama is played.

Now in that particular party the person who was to play the part of Ravana—the demon who had ten heads, the person who was to play that part fell ill. The manager of the party got hold of a person who

was a butcher by profession and he had a very well built body. In that performance the only thing Ravana had to say was, “I am ten headed Ravana”. He was made to remember this phrase, “I am ten headed Ravana” by repetition. When the performance was being staged and Ravana came in confrontation with Hanuman who asked, “Who are you”, he said (with gusto), “I am ten headed Ravana”. Then Hanuman touched him rather mildly with his sword. Well that was a harsh one for that Budhu, (that was the meat seller’s name) so immediately he fell down and whined, “I am Budhu! I am not Ravana”.

His Holiness says, similarly, in this, a person who is realised when he is playing the part in this world, that is different, he will play it well but one who is not realised he will play it like Budhu. The moment he gets struck he immediately forgets what he is and he starts saying something else.

*M.E.P. Yes, Yes, Yes. I have found that the time of being struck is the time to remember.*

### *Friday 24 August*

*M.E.P. Yesterday I was put to sleep and made to dream and it showed me the power of Maya, because I was reminded of the story of Lakshman diving to recover the ring of Rama, and of how he had a whole life within that dive. So I think we should have enormous respect for the power of this particular servant (Sattva).*

H.H. His Holiness says it is a matter for congratulation, that you had in your dream the opportunity in your dream to be reminded of that story which is connected with Lord Rama. He says that this world is a bigger dream—which is Jagriti (day time waking)—while you are awake. Although you are awake this is also a dream but a bigger dream. So what you feel, it is very much similar to sleep and dream. What you see there you see here also. It is sort of complementary and the fact that you had a remembrance indicates that you are pondering on what you have been hearing and this is a sign of Sattva—your increase of Sattva—and that is a good sign. That’s why I said it is a matter for congratulation.

*M.E.P. His Holiness constantly stresses the need for Sattva. It seems also the other two gunas are powerful servants. Do we have ways of dealing with those also so that they may be put to advantage?*

H.H. The three gunas, Rajo, Tamo, Satto guna, they exist simultaneously. The difference is that one predominates over the others. Now those Rajo guna and Tamo guna. There is Rajoguna but also Sattvguna is fairly high. That Rajoguna is acceptable and can be made good use of. Similarly Tamoguna where there is a quantity of Sattvguna also it can be made good use of. Where Tamoguna is so high that Sattvguna is almost negligible of these three, however holy we are it may not be possible to turn it to advantage.

His Holiness takes the example. The effect of Tamoguna is sleep or anger. Now this sleep, although it is Tamoguna but if during sleep we are dreaming something connected with god, then that, although it is Tamoguna, is being made good use of. Similarly if you are angry, if you are angry to control, to infuse discipline, to educate then that will be making good use of your anger. That way we take advantage of that Tamoguna.

Similarly with Rajoguna. Now Rajoguna comes into play when you are doing these worldly thing. Now if while you are doing your worldly things you do it only for the sake of worldly things it will not of course be making good use of it but if you remember at the time you are doing it because of your duty then even though it is Rajoguna, you will be making good use of it because of the element of Sattvguna in it.

*M.E.P. So the element of Sattvguna seems to rely very much on remembering.*

H.H. His Holiness gives another illustration.

On the road we find there are electric poles. Now they are at some distance apart. Now the light of this pole reflects a certain distance and the light of that pole also reflects a certain distance. Now they meet with the result that the darkness that is in the middle disappears. If you remember the Lord before going to sleep and remember Him again when you awake then the darkness in between will also be converted into light and it will be counted as a part of your prayer, your remembering.

*M.E.P. I understand. The practice has been to increase the number of rememberings so that the light poles are closer together and am I to understand by this that though in the day time one may appear to have forgotten—one remembers that one has forgotten. Is His Holiness saying that we shouldn't worry too much about that forgetting?*

*When one remembers—the remembering is that one has just forgotten. Is His Holiness saying that we need not worry too much about those periods of forgetting in between?*

H.H. His Holiness confirms that forgetting in between the two rememberings has got no importance—you can safely ignore it. His Holiness further illustrates the point. A person doesn't remember all the time that he is a man but if anybody tells him that he is an animal then immediately he remembers that he is a man. Similarly by practice a stage will come when your remembering will become natural. You won't have to say that you are a man, you are a man, you are a man. It will become natural and you will only become conscious of it when somebody detracts you from your belief. When somebody says you are not Brahman, then otherwise you continue to feel that you are Brahman all the while, become absorbed in it but you will become conscious of it only when it is pointed out that you are not Brahman, then you will know and say, "I am that".

*M.E.P. You see that there is a sort of trick that is played so that although I know I am given this previous thing, I will sometimes fail to demonstrate it because people will say, "Oh no you are not this". It is as though one had walked out of the palace with the crown and everybody shouted, "It is not yours—it belongs elsewhere", and so one is somehow restricted or prevented from wearing the crown. That is sometimes a difficulty one fails to speak or act when one should.*

*From this one gets a feeling of being constrained to keep it secret and I wonder whether that is correct?*

H.H. His Holiness says that the best thing is that a thing that is really valuable cannot be kept obscured or concealed. Now the happiness which arises out of realisation of one's relationship with God, that cannot be kept secret just as a very strong smelling salt, its smell cannot be concealed by keeping it closed in a bottle. If it is very strong smelling then it will pervade the atmosphere, however carefully we might try to conceal it. Similarly, when we are Absolute, Brahman, it is happiness personified. Therefore when you get to it, that happiness is reflected in you and your happiness will affect others around you. If you go and sit by a person who is happy you yourself will be happy. If you go and sit by a person who is weeping that sorrow will pervade you also. So the best thing is that you let it come out and be seen.

*M.E.P. Would this be true also of the teaching itself, of the passing of the knowledge from one to another?*

H.H. Yes.

*M.E.P. There was a reference to the nature of individuals being different and being attracted to gods of a different nature. Rama and Krishna were mentioned as two. Can we only leave it to them, the individuals, to find for themselves which devotion to make or can they be assisted?*

H.H. One can lead a person to make a choice but the choice has to be his own. The choice is not to be imposed upon the person but once a choice has been made then he can be helped towards the attainment of that goal. For example, if one has chosen Rama, then the person can be helped as to how to increase his feeling of devotion towards Rama.



*M.E.P. If this includes meditation on the name of the chosen, how might one assist in this direction to make an adjustment. If a person had made a choice which was wrong or no longer appropriate for him or his nature, had moved in some way, would he then have to make the change for himself or could that be helped in some way and how could one see such a thing?*

H.H. It may take a little time but nature will bring him back to the correct path. If he has chosen some wrong objective—by wrong I mean incompatible with his own liking—then nature will help him in adjusting. You shouldn't try to interfere, let nature do it.

His Holiness says that there are some people who are not able to take a decision. In them the predominance of Tamaguna is greater and that's why they are in doubt and they are not able to make the final choice. For them, you can help. You can find out their liking and then help them in making a choice.

*M.E.P. Might this lead us in terms of the practice of meditation to choose different Mantras for different people?*

H.H. Yes, that adjustment can be made.

*M.E.P. What are the chief characteristics? I suppose there might be three—main streams of nature. How would one go about choosing a different Mantra for a different Nature? I understand the Mantras which are given in your country are three in number, or they are many?*

H.H. Only one!

*M.E.P. So how does the difficulty arise if there is only one Mantra given? I conceive that a different nature may need something different.*

H.H. His Holiness says that there are three things. There are two major differences, minor distinctions there might be more, but major distinctions are two. One is Sakar, of the body, relates to the God as a body. The other is Nirakar which means God is pervading everywhere—there is no particular body. So if this is the basis of distinction to find the liking of a person, whether he wants the Sakar God or the Nirakar God, then it's easy because for the Sakar and the Nirakar God you give one Mantra—name.

Now this name is just like an interpreter of different languages so a person who believes in the body of God, he by chanting that name will think of that body, while the person who likes to conceive of God as Nirakar, the formless, he by thinking on that very Mantra will think not of a particular body but of a power pervading the Cosmos. So the name will be the same but its interpretations will be different and that interpretation will depend upon his liking whether he wants Sakar or Nirakar.

This is an important assistance to help with the meditation.

## *Saturday 25 August*

*M.E.P. I think the hot weather is very good, it makes me remember that I am a very Chothi Wallah. The Jiva is very powerless on its own to do anything.*

H.H. The Jiva who realises this, then he has learned a lesson that he is dependant on Param-Atman. The major Jiva is wasted, "I can do this and I can do that", but one who feels that without the help of God he can do nothing, he is really a devotee.

*M.E.P. When His Holiness was speaking of Shabda of Brahma, he explained that 'Creation was the meaning of the word' and I understand that as a broad concept. Would His Holiness expand on how the word becomes the concrete creation?*

H.H. Word is not different from its meaning. If you want to analyse the meaning then it will not be different from the word itself. His Holiness repeats the earlier example of mango. Now when one asks what is mango—mango is the word—it is not leaves, wood or fruit it is only the word. So ultimately His Holiness says, the creation was started from the word—Shabda—and ultimately get absorbed in that word.

Just as a juggler while showing his play, creates certain things but they are not real they are just to deceive. Similarly—God the creator is playing and this world has been created from abstract into concrete by stages. So similarly, it will get absorbed by these same stages into abstract. So, the word, Shabda, is perpetual but the creation has arisen out of it and will merge into it.

*M.E.P. Yes, I think my question was really about the stages.*

*N.S. He has described the stages but I cut it short because there were so many of them and I couldn't find exact words to express them. If you like I can speak those stages for you but it will be difficult for me in English.*

*M.E.P. Perhaps at some more leisurely time you can write it.*

H.H. The word is in the mind and it cannot be seen or heard by anybody. That is the first stage. That in vernacular is known as Avyakta, which means that it is unmanifest. Then the second stage is Prakriti—nature, is physical existence. The third stage is known as Mahat Tattva which means the Cosmos—the soul of the Cosmos. The exact word His Holiness is using is Mana of digestion, is heart of Cosmos. Then from that stage the important stage is Akasha—vacuum. From that comes air, Vayu. From air—fire, Agni. From Agni—water, Jala, and from water—earth, Prithvi and from earth then the entire world. This is the outward process. The reverse will be the inward process, earth, water, fire air akasha. The circle of each is ten times bigger as it goes round.

*M.E.P. You mean the relationship between air and fire for example is 1: 10.*

N.S. Yes. His Holiness has further stated that only three can be seen by the physical eye, namely fire, water and earth. The remaining five, these cannot be seen. These are the eight stages of manifestation of God and whenever there is creation they will come into existence one by one, and then get re-absorbed one by one.

*M.E.P. It seems to me that there is a particular difficulty in understanding that arises with Akasha because of this point of change from the subtle to the physical.*

H.H. If there is no Akasha then the word cannot be heard, sound cannot be heard and this Sankalpa–Vikalpa. When the vibration is created by Sankalpa–Vikalpa then Akasha comes in.

Akasha means something not solid some sort of hollowness. Ether or 'vacuum'. One can pronounce because inside the mouth there is that hollowness. If there was no hollowness then no word could be pronounced.

Sankalpa—Thought: desire. Vikalpa—Imagination: oscillation of the mind.

*M.E.P. As you speak, I just wonder whether we have not stumbled on the particular question which I was looking for earlier. You remember I asked for the identification of my own particular question and I wonder whether this has to do with Akasha. My career in architecture is very much related as the words come from the same root, I know.*

H.H. Before you can project your idea about the architecture it has to be conceived in the mind. With the help of Akasha alone can it be developed. Unless there was Akasha it will not be possible to exhibit your ideas about construction of what you want to make outside your mind.

The creator of all this is Prakriti—is nature, who is like a wife to a husband and this Prakriti creates the entire creation and is the art of creation, the art of nature, which is to please her master who has ordered it for his pleasure. That art is reflected in man when he creates different things.

*M.E.P. This means we go through the same steps and so we shouldn't have so much difficulty in understanding what they are.*

H.H. Yes, it's already there; it's only when you will get it.

*M.E.P. In one place His Holiness spoke of ways to help increase the devotion. I wondered if he could just outline just one way?*

H.H. When we remember the many mercies or kindnesses which one has got from God, then a sense of devotion develops and this is known as Bhakti. It was so kind of God that he made us a human being where we can use the various elements he has created. Had he not been so kind, had he made us an insect instead of a man, we couldn't use that art. It's only because of the advantage because of His kindness for which we have to be grateful and this feeling of gratitude for all we have freely received the more humble we are, the greater will be our devotion.

*M.E.P. In the story of Sudama and Krishna, in the explanation there was a two-way devotion. The devotion of Sudama for Krishna and of Krishna for Sudama. I see that some people choose to devote themselves and others don't. Does the Lord also make choices like this?*

H.H. Those who are restless to meet the Lord, who have a keen desire to meet the Lord, not an ordinary desire—a keen desire. That desire or restlessness is accepted by the Lord and he responds with the same degree of restlessness or keenness to select that person so it is the approach of the person which is responded to by the Lord. Lord does not obstruct anyone approaching him. He is open towards anyone who wants to come to him but it is the Jiva who does not always want to go to him. Those who do not want to go to him and want to go astray, he does not mind, let them go astray; but those who want to go to him, he does not let them go astray, he keeps them to himself.

This Jiva is a friend of God but he has become rather mad with God, and as such, he has turned his back towards God and is coming away from Him, and God is coming after him to make him agreeable, to compose his anger and he will not leave the Jiva until he agrees to turn round and agree with God.

*M.E.P. So what will make him agreeable?*

H.H. This is the entire game they play and the moment he becomes agreeable all his troubles will end. He will have trouble only as long as he doesn't agree. The Lord has created the world for play and in the play the Jiva has turned his back towards God and looks towards the world but, whenever he gets the occasion of Satsang—the occasion to meet people who know about God, then he turns his face towards God. When he faces God, the two can meet, with the result that the world disappears for him. He no longer gets the pain and the troubles of the world. There is an end of it.

*M.E.P. So here is the central reason for our meeting, here or in London or anywhere?*

H.H. Sat is the name of God and Satsang means the meeting of God—with some Jivas. What more could the Jiva want?

When one wants the articles of the world then sometimes one does not realise that the want is never satisfied. When he gets the Lord then he gets everything—there is nothing remaining for him to want.

His Holiness gives a story of an exhibition:

Lots of things were exhibited and there was an announcement that those who wanted to purchase anything could do so at substantial discounts, even to the extent of 50%. One person started purchasing everything.

When the exhibition was about to close he went to the person who had organised the exhibition and said “I want to purchase you”. “You can’t purchase me,” was the reply. “Yes, you are inside the exhibition and therefore you must be available for purchase. What is your price?” He said, “my price is love. By purchasing me you get all the exhibition automatically because it is mine to begin with. Why purchase the entire exhibition?”

So with the love of God we get everything. This is abundance.

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