

AUDIENCES

ALLAHABAD

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Report from W.W. For many years it has seemed appropriate to put into practice the guidance received in order to realise the essence of what has been given before seeking further guidance. But now we would appreciate guidance on the basis of what is being revealed.

Now, when the senior groups in the School meet, there is observation of a unity of Being in which all desires fall away leaving a single presence. The presence is observed in silent awareness in which all is contained. As the meetings proceed conversation takes place, but the singleness of Being remains. Everyone has the same awareness; everyone has the same point of view. There is witness to one existence with no separation. All names, all forms, all movements are observed in one existence. This seems natural when the groups meet. Before proceeding further with this report it would be valuable to ask for His Holiness's comments and in particular what is needed now, at this stage of awakening of reality?

H.H. Reality of multiplicity in truth is caused and manifested by the unity alone. Therefore, it is wise to see multiplicity in one and one in multiplicity. Just as only one sun can be seen to reflect in multiple number of pots filled with water. If the pots are variously coloured, then sun can be seen in various colours like green, red and blue etc. Similarly all the individual antahkaranas reflect the same consciousness which is one and universal. All the colours are but reflections of the same light which remains white. The individual is the reflection and the universal is the source of reflections and is one.

The division is only appearance and the unity is real and independent because it can exist even if there were no reflection, but the reverse is impossible. That is why it has been said that we all exist by virtue of the existence of the universal being, the Atman or Param-Atman. This Brahman alone has manifested itself in multifarious forms and the multiplicity which is experienced by the individual antahkaranas is, in fact, not real but is taken to be the basis of individuality. To experience the unity of Being is useful and right, and this is Advaita.

W.W. Perhaps we could give an example of how people find or experience this single existence by the practical example of people working in the School when about 20 people came to work on one of the School houses for one day. The amount of work that needed to be done seemed far too great to be completed in the time available, but it was as if people moved in a great dance and the work completed itself with great efficiency. Everyone spoke of how there was no doing, and no effort, only ease, freedom and joy with everything, and everyone held in the same awareness and singleness of Being.

HH. This example is a practical application of the essence of Advaita. It does show that the philosophical ideas have provided deeper meaning in everyday work.

When an actor takes up any part and plays it with the utmost of his ability, to express the finer emotions, then, without any hitch, changes over to another role; he appreciates the true import of the drama. Such detachment makes work light and joyful.

This is the way all activities should be performed. To the extent that people engage in activity with a feeling of unity, the growth of inner strength will be possible. The work will become lighter and efficiency will also increase. This is an example of experience of the Self in a group.

All the energy in the universe is emanating from one single universal Being. If people accept their station somewhere on this line of universal energy, and retain contact with the universal Being, then all the forces will be available. Although every person is a manifest individual, the moment they come together and form a unified being, then they move closer to the centre of this universal Being and its energy. Thus, when people come together, feel together and work together, then they come closer to the real universal Being, the Absolute. This is the way to proceed.

WW. The secret in his words seems to be to keep contact with the universal Being. Could His Holiness say something on that?

HH. That is right.

WW. When those, who find the unitary existence and singleness of Being, move into world affairs they often seem to get caught by apparent separation and attachment, but the singleness of Being remains as if in the background. In spite of the attraction of the world, this background of Being is now recognised as always present and recognised as the only reality. In this situation, what is needed now?

HH. The being of Advaita, the universal Being, Atman or Param-Atman, has manifested all this creation and is held by his constant energy. In all the manifestations, there exists a relationship already established which pervades through all the individuals in the universe. There isn't any moment when this unity is broken. But individuals who have acquired some knowledge establish their individuality and presume to be totally independent. This feeling and knowledge of independence creates a barrier and the relationship seems to be broken. As soon as this happens the flowing energy cannot replenish the independent individual. Therefore, he becomes a pool of limited energy. The result is that very soon the work becomes heavy, confusion takes place, doubts arise and mistakes abound. Those, on the other hand, who preserve the relationship, their exhausted energies are replenished in time and they successfully finish their job and remain fresh for the next. Therefore, the best way to engage oneself in the worldly activities of manifestations and multiplicity, is to remember this relationship before beginning and at the end as well. If one can manage to remember during the activity, so much the better. It will make one's life lighter, brighter and much more successful.

WW. In relation to remembering the unity, as His Holiness says, people sometimes think that they have to do this with their heads, thinking about it, which is a form of subject-object. Whereas it would seem that real remembering is not anything related to separation. Would His Holiness kindly comment on that?

HH. This remembering of the unity with the universal being can be seen in three ways. The first is the real remembering which is immutable. It is always there. Very few people have acquired this through devotion or true knowledge. For them this natural phenomenon has become a part of their nature. Fundamentally, it is available to every individual everywhere and all the time, but experienced by very few. When people either do not know this natural oneness, or having known, sometimes forget, then they do need to remember. It can be done either through the head or through the heart. When it arises within the heart then it is felt as a prayer for unity through the emotional aspect. On the other hand, if just known and not much practised, then it is done mostly through the intellect. Both ways are right because either way the relationship is re-established. In practical life, the person one loves one never forgets; the person one is trying to love, one remembers through the heart very often, but the thing or the person one feels important and yet forgets, one forgets because no deep relationship or love has yet been established. In such cases the search becomes frantic and mostly through the head, but having found it, one feels very happy. No matter which way is available it is the remembering alone that matters. If people keep on remembering through the head, it will naturally go into the heart and become more available. A saintly man never forgets and stays in union with bliss without any effort, intellectual or emotional.

The reason for not remembering is the importance one attaches to things other than the Atman. With knowledge of the truth, the real importance of the Absolute and one's natural relation with it begins to dawn and finally gets fully established. Basically, the individual and the universal are the same. There is no difference, but being involved in worldly affairs then, due to ignorance, one forgets this truth. One begins to remember as one receives spiritual knowledge. The growth of individuality makes one limited and this limit is the manifes-

tation of ignorance. As the limits are extended by remembering, progressively the individual moves from individuality to universality.

WW. Could we just check that we are now speaking of the whole essence of the teaching on realisation; to realise that there is only this one Param-Atman and that all expressions of individuality are the expressions of that one reality. This seems to be the whole essence of the teaching. Could His Holiness confirm this, that there is no separation?

HH. Basically, human beings can be divided into two categories; emotional and intellectual. Both these aspects are common, but one remains predominant. One is emotionally charged, while the other is intellectually alive. They can be helped only in their own ways. In order to help them move towards total unity one must not expect them to follow only one prescribed path. If the individual is devotional, then all the devotional material (for discussion etc) must be from the devotional literature, because this is what would be helpful to induce him to move. If he is forced to go through intellectual exercises, then he will either take a long time to respond or fall away. Similarly, the intellectually disposed person is desirous of acquiring a rationally valid knowledge before he commits to the union with the universal. Force on him devotional material and he will either fall away or take a long time to follow. Therefore, the leader must organise these two types in a suitable manner so that they can flower in their own way. In reality even the devotional needs knowledge and the intellectual needs practice that is in any way from the heart.

For example, a father may have two sons. One is intellectually advanced and established his independent family and prefers to live separately from his father. If he is in trouble sometimes, he will come to the father for advice or help, which of course the father will provide. The other son may be devotional and although fully capable of having an independent establishment, prefers to stay with the father so that he can serve him most of the time. If he needs any advice or help, it will be readily available from the father. This is the slight difference and does not need particular emphasis either way. Both are good in their own way.

WW. So when we are speaking of this availability of awareness of being for people in the School when they meet together, should we take it more like the son who stays with the father, which is so immediate and so available?

HH. It is not really necessary that one should have preference for one way over the other. School is an organisation where both types of individual will come and they would both need help according to their natural disposition. To presume one is better than the other is not helpful for the organisation. This difference in individual approach is a natural phenomenon. The most one can presume is that the devotionally charged individual already has built-in knowledge, so he does not need it again. But for further progress to deepen his spiritual activity he still does need fresh supply of deeper knowledge. There is some danger also in this type. If the environment changes, his devotion may also change if he does not possess deeper rational knowledge of truth, and then fall away. Similarly, if the intellectually disposed person, having acquired deeper rational knowledge of unity, chooses not to put this into practice, then he will also fall away. If he does choose to put his knowledge into practice, he can't do without some devotional expression. Devotion and reason are complementary; the weak on both sides presume them to be contrary to each other.

The choice is not between a devotional or an intellectual way. This division is a matter of fact for the individual only. School is not an individual. It has no such choice. Its duty is to provide only what is useful for the individual and refrain from forcing one type of medicine onto everyone. This happens only when an organisation becomes individualistic, and usually fails to meet the needs of the social reality. They become dogmatic and authoritarian, with very good intention, but in ignorance. This must be avoided. This type of approach can turn devotional into fanatic and intellectual into debater, and both are unsuitable for spiritual realisation of the total unity of the universe.

WW. And obviously meditation is common to both and necessary to both?

HH. The meditation is common to both. It will provide them with extra energy and strength with which they can progress on their own way. In course of time, and further progress, they will naturally converge with each other. The moment of realisation is the same for both types and it is full of emotional and intellectual energies in harmonious proportions. Thus both types must meditate regularly if they want progress on their respective ways.

WW. We have asked His Holiness in the past about the practice of meditation, and about real meditation. His Holiness said the real meditation is Absolute, Yoga. He also said that meditation is to be one, which is, we understand, Advaita. Is this correct?

HH. There is the systematic concept of subject-object, and the activity to bring about unity of the two. In consciousness they are in any way one. Only in expression this natural unity takes triformal mode. The act of meditation also involves triformal situation. There is the meditator, the unity as the object of meditation, and the application of mantra and act of meditation in time. The meditator takes a position, initiates the mantra in his mind and allows the mantra to move in its own way, without making any effort to regulate its movement. The object of all the meditational activity, or lack of it, is the total unity of the three. When this unity takes place then the awareness of the subject, object and activity of meditation is unified into one single awareness, the Advaita or the presence of the Atman. If people experience this total unity even for a minute or two during half an hour of meditation, they reach to the source of all energy. That centre of energy is the greatest capital, the most valuable possession, or the fortune available to mankind. Those who reach this situation, rise with extra energy and make use of it in all worldly pursuits. They lead a happy and harmonious life for themselves, and help the society with happy and harmonious influences which makes the society better.

WW. As the reality of unitary existence comes into view, some people grow stronger and more confident, but for other people forces arise that pull them away. Is this inevitable? Can anything be done to help?

HH. This is certainly true that there will be some, who having acquired some strength and knowledge, would gladly carry on with the organisation, so that they can repay their debt for the opportunity. They are responsible people. But there will be those who go to an organisation and acquire whatever good fortunes are available; in this case, knowledge and meditation, which gives them enough force. It makes them brighter and they think that now they have enough, and they are good enough to manage without the help of the organisation. They don't feel responsible to the society, because they have pride in their knowledge and spiritual strength through meditation, and feel they can go their own way. They can easily develop a sense of spiritual or philosophical superiority. This creates Ahankara and eventually becomes the means of their downfall. They leave the organisation and soon spend their strength aimlessly. Sooner or later they become destitute in their spiritual background. If some good sense still prevails they will come back. That is left to them to decide. This sense of pride is not applicable only to ordinary people in the School, it can happen to very highly developed people as well, those who are very close to full realisation. In case of fully realised men no pride is possible, but before that final enlightenment there are various levels where pride can take over. Some develop Dhyana-bhavana (pride of meditation), Jnana-bhavana (pride of spiritual knowledge) and usually fall behind. The only test of sincere pursuit and right progress in knowledge and meditation is that it must turn them towards humility. They become liberal, tender, compassionate and never show off or propagate their superiority.

WW. It seems that the only safe way is to realise "I have nothing of my own".

HH. This is, of course, very helpful, but it is not enough. Simply to presume that nothing belongs to me is not

going to cure all further situations which could be troublesome. There remains another aspect. If it does not belong to me, then the question is, to whom does it really belong? This knowledge is equally essential for it creates understanding of proper and traditional hierarchy through which it is held in trust for the benefit of the world in general. One can close oneself into a small room and presume that the outer world does not exist (like frogs in a well). The world and the civilisation is not going to disappear. Therefore it is good to feel that nothing belongs to oneself, but one must also know how it is all held and kept alive through generations. These complement each other. Even when the power supply of electrical force is constant, any loose connection at a point will undo the supply. Only when all the connections are restored will the total supply of electrical force be available at every point. In exactly the same way, when an individual limits himself by pride, he loses contact with the universal force which is ever present and naturally available. Then he cannot make use of the universal force which he naturally deserves and has to cope with whatever energy he controls by being separate. To feel that nothing belongs to me is a safety device to keep Ahankara out and this is one factor. The other factor is the knowledge of all relationships, various hierarchical positions and the source as a complete system. Both are complementary and necessary.

WW. So the secret is to help people maintain the connection.

(Shankaracharya made no response, perhaps taking this as an acceptable statement rather than a question.)

WW. The “pull away” also shows itself for some people after initiation. Most people find that at the time of initiation meditation gives greater depth and significance. Often one recognises that some people have a quality in their being which knows the importance of the work. It is as if these people will play a major role in the School – and yet often it is these people who fall away fairly soon after receiving meditation. Can anything be said on this?

HH. This is an example of passion or impetuosity, very much like a wind or a flood. During the monsoon period the little rivers get flooded and overflow for a time but soon the water flows away and then only a trickle remains. Sometimes they become dry after the rainy season. Similarly, some have a passion for such things. They show great enthusiasm and pretend to be seriously engaged but soon lose interest and leave. Just as Jnanavesa (being possessed by knowledge) is responsible for creating Ahankara and brings downfall very quickly, the Bhavavesa (being possessed by a feeling) fizzles out quickly. Avesa is like being possessed by a spirit but in this case by devotional feeling which is common in religious fanatics. This sort of passion or impulsive devotion or service is very temporary and does not last long. The only course for such people is a fair amount of rational knowledge which might bring them to some balance.

WW. The only problem is that many of these people leave very quickly after the initiation, although the initiation does make a deep impression upon them.

HH. There would hardly be much difference between those possessed by spirit and those possessed by emotion. If they can be spotted out, all one can do is to put them in the company of a rational group and if they can derive some good influences from them it would be their good luck. From practical example, one can see that a new young bull is always paired with an old bull in a harness for ploughing. The old is trained and will move only at a reasonable pace. He might have to suffer some jerks but the young bull soon learns to behave. (Shankaracharya laughed while giving the example of the young bull being paired with an old bull.)

Sunday 22 October

W.W. Your Holiness, I have not yet had a chance to study the transcripts of the beautiful answers you gave us yesterday so this morning I would like to start by asking some practical questions related to meditation. First, could we ask in relation to the physical body. We know that the body is of no concern in meditation, but many people in the West have physical tension and sometimes find it difficult to relax the body. When told to sit straight for meditation they sometimes produce more tension which His Holiness has called "acrobatics in anti-tension". It seems that there is a great need to help people to have physical relaxation. Could His Holiness say something on that?

H.H. Whenever anyone is tired, one needs rest. Physical tiredness demands physical rest, mental tiredness demands mental rest and the meditation has been so designed as to take account of both these problems, provided it can be entered into simply and properly. If when we are over-tired and we are fortunate enough to go to sleep then recovery is natural. But if someone cannot sleep even when tired then the problem is not physical. That person is tense, not by body but by mind, which calls for mental solution. If people can escape from such a situation by entering into the act of proper meditation, that will be useful. But if one cannot and the moment meditation is begun tensions increase or one gets into acrobatics of anti-tension, then one must reconsider the possessions stored in the mind. These are ideas, worry, pride, prejudices, desires etc. accumulated over a long time. They may be sorted out one by one. The best help in this situation is to make a note of them all and get some advice on how to sort them out. A wise man can explain to anyone how to solve his or her mental problem. But the rise of tension could be a natural problem as well as arising from lack of knowledge and proper instruction. They might be expecting too much within a short period and which may not have come their way immediately. This makes them perplexed; they might begin to think they are incapable of meditating. This feeling would take them away from meditation. Those who have some courage and continue with the practice, develop some interest into its theory and practice; they listen to the instructions and sooner or later they achieve success and carry on.

This sort of problem is not only arising in the practice of meditation. It can be seen in other fields of knowledge or training, where someone new who finds training strange and difficult might give up, because of feeling inadequate. Others may persevere and learn and in time acquire the training successfully.

Human beings have a natural capacity to master any situation. Nothing is impossible for the human mind. Particularly this simple technique of meditation which is designed to provide relief from bodily or mental tensions and give rest of a super-natural type which is extremely potent. Provide them with better understanding so that they can transcend this first hurdle.

The result of physical work is tangible. One can engage oneself with much more energy to earn one's living; but meditation can't provide tangible results immediately. Therefore, it can be accepted either on trust or knowledge. It is like growing a fruit tree. One has to prepare the ground, sow the seed and water it. After many days, the seed sprouts and after months of careful work a crop is available. Fruit trees take years before they yield fruit. Meditation is a non-physical field; it requires trust and regular practice. With some explanation and proper guidance it can produce not only mental peace but physical and spiritual benefits as well. Even one moment of peace is an inducement for another, and in this way interest can be built up for deeper transformation. Once a taste is acquired, no sane person will give it up. No human being wants to give up evolution, progress and reasonable gain.

W.W. On previous occasions His Holiness has said that when the cycle of Pranas have become disturbed all that is needed is to simply watch and observe the natural rhythm. Some people have found that the simple observation of breath helps greatly in bringing stillness. Would his Holiness comment on this simple observation of breathing?

H.H. The simple practice of meditation which has been given is a comprehensive system. When a person sits for meditation and takes a straight posture with the spinal cord in natural form, closes the eyes and rests the limbs, the breathing begins to balance itself and becomes refined, lighter and subtler. Breathing being harmonised helps the mind to settle down and be quiet. This helps the eyes to be still within. This is a clear situation when mantra can be initiated and move of its own rhythm. For example, the farmers in India before the advent of tractors used to tie 4 or 5 bulls on to a long single rope. They move like the radius in a circle. If one stops then all stop and if one moves then they all move to tread the corn to separate it from the husks. It is the same with meditation. If one is still then others will be still and vice versa; if one is in tension then others also get into action. Body, breath, manas and eyes are seen to work in harmony. If body is not still then all will remain agitated. Therefore, the technique of meditation does not prescribe separate disciplines for body, breath, mind and eyes. Preparatory conditions being right the mantra is initiated and its rhythm immediately influences the breathing system and refines its movements. It makes the breath gentler and subtler. Consequently, the expected stillness becomes possible.

Other systems prefer to specify separate disciplines for each factor. Like training of body first and only this is specified, then breathing training has to begin and the process goes on. Whether a separate approach or comprehensive approach is used, both aim for the same stillness of being, but the comprehensive system is easy and comfortable. Other approaches are cumbersome and sometimes turn out to be harmful.

If breathing is heavy then there is much loss of energy. Eating, running and sleeping uses more breath and so consume much energy. If the pranas can be refined the energy will be saved and lengthen the life span itself. Finally, it is not necessary to attend to these factors separately and one should carry on proper meditation which will look after all the factors which participate and co-operate. They save energy and also replenish energy.

W.W. It is understood that no direction is given regarding the breath during the meditation but some people find at other times when the mind is agitated that if they allow the attention to rest just where the nose meets the lips, and become aware of the breath passing across this region, this helps them greatly to find mental rest. Obviously not a practice in any way, just an awareness. Should they be allowed to carry on?

H.H. This can neither be prescribed nor prohibited. This falls into those separative systems and does not suit everyone. In Bhagavad Gita it has been mentioned to concentrate attention at the tip of the nose. Eyes are not used in this activity and the tip mentioned is the midpoint between the eyes from which the nose begins. This is usually associated with term called Trataka. Too much concentration may cause pain.

Watching the breath between the nose and the lip is like attending to traffic at a crossroad like the traffic police. Here one has to pay attention to incoming and outgoing breath respectively. In order to keep a check on its motion and speed the mind is made to observe this movement. The mind must not be allowed to move away from this junction. This practice is equally cumbersome. It can help the Manas to be still but the meditation as given to you establishes the stillness of Antahkarana. It is comprehensive. It is not designed to still just one aspect only. It is like the main switch in the powerhouse. When switched off then everything is powerless and inoperative. If you have taken to meditation then you do not need to go for the appetiser again.

It is not wise to water each leaf of the tree, but it is certainly wise to water the roots of the tree. In doing so, every part of the tree will be nourished and will flourish. System of meditation is of this nature, it waters the roots.

W.W. To follow that last and lovely answer perhaps it would be appropriate to put a question based on my wife's experience of meditation.

"Often when meditating there arises a fine energy. It is felt in the body as a comfortable warmth. This can be experienced and set aside. But, when the energy arises in mind, almost simultaneously come creative ideas, usually practical and trivial.

When these are seen and sense prevails, the mantra is quickly restarted. Then there are more intellectual inspirations, seemingly flashes of insight which one feels are more difficult to leave. Even this question, it must be confessed, arose during meditation practice.

Is there a better way to use this energy? Should it be returned to Absolute as praise?

And lastly, is this the same substance as one experiences, almost always, after meditation as an outpouring of love for whatever or whoever the eyes alight upon?"

H.H. In the devotional (Upasana) system these experiences, such as the rise of good ideas related to spiritual life, are not supposed to be Vikshepa (peace disruptions). Sometimes, good ideas do arise, while meditation is on. But, in fact, this is an example of Vikshepa in the practice of meditation. If it arises outside of the meditation period then it could be useful. It does create Vikshepa in meditation, even if the content has some goodness. Therefore these ideas should not be allowed during meditation, but after meditation. They will not disappear. They will still remain in Antahkarana. All this happens because of goodness of meditation, and it is better to keep these away from meditation. If meditation is practised more acutely, then after meditation whatever may flash into the mind will be much better.

After meditation when a feeling of love arises it can be either Prema (Love) or Moha (Love with attachment). The definition of Moha is a feeling of love towards one who is expected to give back some pleasure. Prema is a feeling to renounce for the welfare of others, but in Moha one's own welfare is bound. Prema is a gift of meditation which is a pure feeling for the goodness for others. Generosity and philanthropy arise in Prema, so that most people may be comforted.

W.W. (on behalf of the Ladies Group)

In a previous answer Your Holiness has described love as "the natural inbetween". These simple words have turned upside down our whole idea of love. Most of us saw love as an activity. We thought we loved, but we did not see that this activity that we called love, opened the way for expectation of some return, resentment and even hate. The words you gave were "the action of love is to unite". We saw that love clears away long held ideas. We are beginning to trust that love is. Perhaps, gradually our relationships with others will be completely changed until there is only one relationship and there are no "others".

H.H. To differentiate between Prema and Moha, there is a simple test. When an individual feels that he would renounce something for the welfare of another or others, the feeling is called Prema. This feeling is naturally expanding and pervades wherever it is expressed and put into practice. Its effect is not contraction but expansion. It aims at giving and not taking., The giver is independent (free in will) and the receiver is dependent (who waits on another's free will). If there is a will or wish to receive then Moha comes in. Although those who love each other do give and do take from each other, the motive (free will) remains renunciation (from the giver in both cases). The Scriptures say that an act of sacrifice (renunciation) is naturally honoured by a return sacrifice from free will but not from expectation of a similar act. Expectation is coloured by selfishness. When someone loves another and expects to be loved, then it turns into a business deal. (I scratch your back and you scratch mine.) This sort of love turns into Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Attachment), Moha (Pride) and Matsara (Envy) etc (vices). It all begins with Prema, but results in Moha in course of time. According to Indian traditions, the newly married couple is seen as the form of Lakshmi and Narayana (Absolute and Prakriti). Mothers go to see them and make some offerings. This is a very old tradition. This is the mark of Prema. Later on their interests clash, for each side expects some comfort from the other. Then Prema turns into Moha which transforms into Kama, Krodha etc. Antahkarana has Samskara (essence) of both types, but Moha is rather major and Prema is minor amongst worldly people. It all begins with Prema but having turned towards Moha it creates disharmony and misery. If Prema remains constant, then one does not need

anything in return from anyone, and only the welfare of the other is willed; no impediments will touch the giver, no evils of Kama, Krodha etc will touch that person. The moment this feeling changes and one feels that something must come in return, and has not been received, or not received enough, or one has not received anything of choice, then clashes must take place. Since it all begins in Prema, if one is attentive to keep it pure then bliss must prevail in life and the maximum number of people can be served. Only Prema brings the greatest number of people together. When desire for return creeps in then Prema ends in clashes.

In the household set-up the division of duties is very essential. Between husband and wife the duties are set. Husband is responsible for the protection of the wife in every manner. Wife has the duty to love the husband totally. When this division is honoured there arises no clash. If clash takes place then the Prema is missing because someone is not meeting the duty properly, and this may lead to unfortunate situations.

Monday 23 October

W.W. Your Holiness, I would like to refer to the answer you gave us on remembering and the observations made by people in the senior groups in the School.

As already described to you, when the groups meet, there is observation of unity of Being, of single presence. The presence is observed in silent awareness. It is observed to simply be there, completely and naturally without limit. No effort is required, no act of remembering is required. It is like H.H.'s description of real remembering which is natural and always available, and part of nature. Even when this gets covered and we need to make the effort of remembering through heart and head, the real remembering seems always there. How can we help people to be more confident in this? And is this remembering catching sight of the big house of Samashti?

H.H. The experience of existence or presence which one has is all pervading and ever present. Remembering is evoked according to individual's Samskara. The worldly activities (Pravriti) causes the consciousness of separation from that presence. In reality the presence is all pervading and everlasting. At moments when this presence is experienced in the Antahkarana, the initial experience is the existence of the Self, oneself. When engaged in the worldly activity, it is experienced in conjunction with Manas, Buddhi and all senses of knowledge and action in various forms, as who am I, what I have to do, why, where, when and how I have to engage in activity. With the appearance of these notions the memory of that everpresence becomes hazy. Unless the mind is withdrawn totally from external engagements the remembering cannot be clear and full. The hazy view of the presence of the Self is, therefore, due to Vikshepa. The antidote to, Vikshepa is meditation. Therefore, I must come out of Vikshepa sometime every day. If this return to the all-pervading and everlasting presence is not conducted then the memory would become more hazy. In general people do manage most of their worldly affairs with the co-operation of senses and mind, but without realising that all energy for every type of activity comes from that presence. They recharge their energy only through rest and sleep, which is not enough for creative spiritual life. In order to help in this situation, meditation is very necessary. For example, wells or ponds become very dry when water is withdrawn during the day, but during the restful night they accumulate enough water from within the Samashti aspect of the land. The meditation is the conscious approach to unite with the Samashti presence which is the ultimate source of conscious energy and it is inexhaustible. Meditation is not done as an activity to achieve this, but it happens sometime during that period. The more one experiences this presence, the more confident one naturally becomes.

The sun always shines brilliantly. If the water in the pond is dirty its reflection will be dull and hazy. If the water is in movement then the reflection will be broken. If it is clean and still the sun will be reflected in its full glory. This is exactly what happens to Antahkarana. It can bring about natural remembering only if it is clean

and still. With constant and regular practice of meditation that experience of the presence is made possible and natural so that even after the meditation the presence persists, through which the quality of activity in the world becomes creative and universal. Therefore, just as everyone needs food, water and sleep to prolong life, everyone needs meditation to expand activity from limited individual to limitless Samashti, the Self, the creative consciousness.

W.W. His Holiness has said; "meditation is a journey back home, home to the Self. Troubles and tribulations are only in the early part of the journey until attention is aroused by emotion and memory of the Self. Then there is only one thing to look for and one doesn't need the help of anyone else." Would His Holiness say more about attention aroused by emotion and memory of the Self?

H.H. Whatever one experiences of the external world, through whatever means, is different from the experience of the Self. Experience of the world, which keeps on changing, arises with the help of senses and mind. Just as the vision of form and colour is experienced through the agency of the eyes, the tactile and other sensory knowledge is gathered through skin, nose, ears and tongue. All knowledge derived through senses arises from substances which are transitory. Experience of the Self is different because the Self is eternal and therefore always the same. This experience arises when all other means of experiences are transcended. This is what is left out of all experiences and knowledge. This left-over is the substrata which can neither be grasped through mind or left out of it. Because this presence of the Self is there, mind and senses have the facility to experience. Reason can only indicate its existence, but in total stillness it is there in its fullness. Thus when one reaches home it is meant to be oneself, the limitless Samashti, the omnipresent and the omniscient. Having reached there, there is nothing else, so no need for help. The limitless seeks no help. If one needs help one is limited.

Shankaracharya then told the story from the Upanishads which is said to have taken place after the war between good and evil, won by the Divine forces of good. The Divine forces are the universal elements of water, fire, air etc., whose power comes directly from the Absolute or Brahman. In some traditions these universal forces are considered Godly or Divine. Indra, representing universal Manas, is said to be Lord of these gods (and so also Lord of the senses).

In the court of Indra, claims were being made for the victory. The god of water (Varuna), the god of fire (Agni) and the god of air (Vayu) were trying to establish their superiority by quoting their strength, valour and exploits during the war. While this battle of words and glory was going on, the Brahman, who had witnessed these claims being made, appeared as a strange and wondrous being of great splendour (called a Yaksha). Everyone in the court was astonished and unable to comprehend who or what this amazing apparition could be. Indra asked Varuna, the god of water, to go and find out who was this being of such splendour. Varuna went to the Yaksha and asked who he was. The Yaksha asked Varuna to identify himself first. Varuna being in the mood for exaltation due to victory, described in detail how he nourished the whole creation and how, if he wished, he could deluge the creation destroying everything, and how he had shown his great might in defeating the whole army of demons and evil forces. Yaksha accepted that he was great but to verify his claims threw a piece of straw on the ground and asked Varuna to moisten it. Varuna tried with all his strength and power but the straw remained dry. Ultimately he was forced to accept his limitations and walked away in humility to report that he did not have the capacity to figure out the Yaksha. In turn both Agni and Vayu as the gods of fire and air were sent to try their wit and valour. They failed to burn the straw or blow it away and felt humiliated. After this inglorious set-back Indra himself decided to approach the Yaksha but, as he came near, the Yaksha disappeared so as to show to Indra that he was not important enough even for a conversation. Indra had to be told (by Uma the consort of Shiva) that it was Brahman himself who had appeared in manifest form with all his power and glory, which is second to none, to show that the power really belongs to the Brahman and as

long as anyone takes the glory to oneself, one would never be able to know or understand the Brahman by any means.

Shankaracharya then said, the essence of this quotation is to illustrate that mind, senses, Buddhi and Ahankara cannot experience the reality of the Self. Therefore, in meditation, they must be left outside and in doing so the Self becomes reality, which is limitless, omnipresent and omniscient.

Bliss is the substance of the Absolute. It is at the causal level of our emotional being. When emotion is utilised, then there is more of oneself engaged. Therefore, emotional aspect, being devotional, is helpful in keeping out the interplay of senses and mind.

Everyone experiences the Self sometime, however little duration that may be. Who can survive without bliss? So everyone has some glimpse of that blissful state of just being oneself. This memory is, therefore, common to everyone. Supported with emotion, the approach to meditation becomes easier and stillness becomes possible. This experience can be verified only by oneself for oneself. Direction to such experience can be described or indicated, but never actualised, nor verified through any source of communicative knowledge. The emotion and the memory in this context is the presence of the Self or the Sat-Chit-Ananda, the existence, consciousness and bliss.

W.W. So in relation to those last words would it be right to say that true emotion is still and true memory is still?

H.H. True emotion and real memory are closest to the Self, and they express the power of the Self. There is no intermediary, no in-between. This is why they are pure and real.

W.W. Could we now relate that to meditation. In previous audiences one has spoken about the practice of meditation and real meditation. His Holiness said that real meditation is Absolute, that real meditation is Yoga, total immobility. He has also said that meditation is to Be, to be One. So this sounds as though this is Advaita. Is this in fact so?

H.H. Stillness is the basis of existence, motives are transitory. The true existence cannot be experienced by motive activities, but only by stillness. Stillness is the essence, the spirit that is by itself, one and limitless within which movements take place with limitation. When there is motion, still there is stillness.

Stillness is all that remains when everything is discounted. If there is no fundamental stillness, where shall motion take place? Motion is there because stillness gracefully allows its appearance within itself. To reach stillness is to transcend the state of motions, actions and knowing, and even not knowing.

We see the objects and events taking place in daylight, but when the light is gone can darkness be seen? It can't be seen by the eyes for they are not designed to see darkness and yet something within does experience that utter darkness and names it as darkness. Thus self is that stillness which sees light and darkness both. During sleep one may sleep without any experience of any sort, and when one is fortunate enough to have the experience of such a sleep one wakes up with great delight and total satisfaction. Who experiences that delight and satisfaction, and with what? Obviously all senses, mind, Buddhi etc. are asleep. They are all still. In that stillness the bliss is experienced.

Sometimes people experience that their mind does not seem to work, intellect on occasion fails. The question is, who, inspite of stupefied mind and failing intellect, knows that mind or intellect, when all that one feels is non-function of mind and brain. One has to conclude that there is stillness, and that stillness is consciousness; which knows the mind (Manas) the knower of the world; and knows the intellect (Buddhi) the analyser or synthesiser of ideas and its discrimination. That stillness is one without a second; that is Advaita, the total Yoga, the Absolute. Stillness has to be limitless because if it was limited then somebody will move it in the limitless sometime.

The scriptures and Upanishad speak so much about the being which is still yet moving. It moves without

legs; it moves things, even mountains, without hands; it sees with eyes and even without eyes in the subtle world. In that stillness things or creation are born, kept going and disappear, to reappear again. It remains untouched by birth as well as death. In it is the experience of the world and the experience beyond all experiences. It is not only that which is present, but also that which is not present, because it is the Presence in which all conscious and beautiful actions take place without any loss.

The creation is positive. All positive things arise from somewhere which cannot be positive, but neither is it negative or void, for it is transcendental which takes account of the positive and also that which is beyond it. Therefore, whatever comes within the Vyashti experience, within his Antahkarana, and whatever is within the Samashti, now or ever, is all in the consciousness the Absolute which is still. This stillness is the ocean of all power; it has the prerogative to do something, not to do something or do something unknown. This is the prerogative of freedom. It is not bound to any order because it establishes all orders.

Since everyone in this creation enjoys the existence in stillness, and also the known existence in activities, one may ask what extra is provided by the meditation. In everyday life everyone enjoys good health, but if someone goes through disciplined exercises every day then he develops his muscles and increases his strength so much that a number of ordinary men cannot overcome him. A wrestler, if need be, can manage to control a crowd of rowdy men with real authority, but the reverse is not possible. A man who meditates properly and regularly develops his spiritual and intellectual powers so much that he can easily surpass ordinary men who do not meditate. He is in touch with the ultimate source of power, so naturally he will excel in any activity in which he has to engage himself. The difference is formidable, and yet very easy to accomplish.

Wherever a man of real meditation goes, he prevails, not by brute force or tyranny, but by love, true knowledge, reason and constant awareness. He becomes what he really is and all his impediments are dissolved.

WW. As a follow up on that, presuming all the strength and all the power and all the possibilities in that last answer come from the Self, then from an individual point of view it could be expressed in humility and surrender?

H.H. In spiritual terminology it is called Krpa. (Compassion, Mercy, Charity or Love, provided it does not presume a precondition of pity as a cause. It flows without asking. It has no cause and, therefore, it never looks for any return either. Usually Krpa is translated as Compassion.) [Note: presumably words in brackets are a comment by the interpreter.] Usually men with power, even with spiritual power, develop Ahankara which stops further evolution or total freedom. But the wise never claim any achievements. They simply let the Self do whatever the Self chooses to do. Humility keeps the door open so that the consciousness and bliss keeps passing without any restriction.

WW. It would seem that humility, humbleness, is needed to surrender, because individual himself cannot surrender.

H.H. Humility (Namrata) points to a situation when a man with wisdom stands facing the Absolute and opens the door for all time. The Krpa of the Self passes without hindrance through this door and it keeps on flowing without any limitation. In Ahankara the door remains closed so that no one could take away the wealth acquired without proper recognition and praise. Those with Ahankara treat Namrata as weakness, but it is an aspect of real existence which allows the presence of the Self to prevail without any hindrance. In humility everyone gains, for the giver loses nothing and those receiving can take as much as they like. Even if the egoist with power restricts the humble person, the power within will come through.

WW. Being here with His Holiness provides a living evidence of what he is speaking of. When I look at the calendar it says that we have been here only three days and yet that doesn't seem true. One seems to have been here for ever. When I look at the calendar it says that we haven't made a visit for many, many years and this again does not seem to be true, because sitting here it feels as if one has never been absent.

Interpreter: (A gentle smile from His Holiness fills the gathering with bliss.)

His Holiness was asked if he had a parting message. He said:

H.H. Retain a happy disposition all the time, and as said just before, there is a level of existence where we are all one, and there is no separation. With this feeling – when you assemble to meditate in the School – then feel that unity. This should help the School with ideas, feelings and life forces from this end as desired. With remembrance the relationship will remain alive, which should be useful because the internal connections are established; then, by remembering, the feelings and thoughts become one and the help derived is unique. There may well be physical distance, but from the spiritual point of view there is proximity and mutual help.

With my blessings you should be happy and be useful in the spiritual progress of the School and its members.

शान्ति