

14 December 1964

READING 8

'THE WAY OF LIBERATION'

After meditating with the Shankaracharya on the first morning of my visit to him last August, an unprepared question bubbled up from somewhere inside me:

How to connect oneself with the Fountain of Knowledge?

S. We distinguish between the *Fountain of Knowledge* and the *shower of Knowledge*. The shower is the outside source available in the world from books, Schools or Realized Men. People engrossed in the material world of pleasure are like pots turned upside down. However generous the shower, none of it goes into the pots. They deprive themselves, shut themselves off, and exist on the few drops which enter them unconsciously. Those pots that are turned right-way-up usually find plenty to fill their life with...

The other category of men who seem to *be* the Fountain of Knowledge, or to be connected with it, are the rare ones, who have been on the Way in their previous life and died before full Self-realization...

The deserving will certainly inherit the Fountain after Self-realization. Geographical situation makes no difference. People around the Fountain may not realize it, whereas someone from a distant land might come to it just because of sincerity and devotion. Although everyone will get some influence from the Fountain, only that one who realizes himSelf will inherit. He told a story of the original Shankara:

There was once a temple of Sharada (the Goddess of Wisdom) in Kashmir, and to this temple there were four gates: one for Dharma (Intellectual Way), one for Artha (Way of Action), one for Kama (Emotion), and the fourth for Moksha (Liberation); the first three were kept open, but the fourth was closed and only a Realized Man could open it. The first Shankaracharya happened to go there and went straight into the temple through the Gate of Liberation. The learned men of the temple asked him, 'How could you go in through that closed gate?' But the Goddess was heard to murmur, 'He is a Realized one.'

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[Note: The first three gates (always open) represent the three Traditional Ways with their long, tedious, often painful disciplines by which body, mind and heart have been coerced in the hope of redemption. But this Fourth Way of the Shankaracharya's is often called the 'Way of Liberation'.]

What does '*Liberation*' mean? – *Liberation from What?*

(Pause for Discussion)

You remember that the philosophy of the Holy Tradition is known as the 'Advaita', non-dualistic philosophy, and 'liberation' for the first Shankaracharya must mean liberation from all dualistic forms of thought, all conflict, all struggle. Therefore for us it must mean liberation from the past, for we have only to pierce and dissolve this 'Cloud of Unknowing'. This may

become clearer if you hear part of a 'Conversation' which C.L. has just written (a copy of the whole paper is in the Library):

– ... the work we used to do was based on the idea that man does not remember himSelf – that he can only do so by constant effort and practice – by a constant struggle against the forces that keep him asleep.

– And is it any different now?

– Yes, it is quite different now. We have made a new discovery – a discovery almost as fundamental as Self-remembering itself. We have discovered that Self-remembering is natural for man – that it is part of man's nature to remember himSelf. But again and again he forgot how to do it.

– Then what did he actually forget?

– He forgot how to find the energy required for Self-remembering; for Self-remembering requires a special kind of energy – a kind of energy which is very delightful – very attractive to the mind. The mind is actually always searching for this energy, but it looks in the wrong direction. Once it is shown where to look, it will follow the taste until it finds it. There is nothing the mind wants more than to find the energy it needs for Self-remembering.

– And this is what the meditation does?

– Yes, this is what the meditation does – it leads us to the Source of this energy. And once the mind has got to know the way, it seeks to fill itself with it more and more. And the more it is filled with the right energy, the more we remember ourSelves – quite naturally and without any effort or struggle...

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– But why did we never hear of this before?

– Simply because the method was lost. All one has heard, all some of us at one time experienced, and all one has read about the difficulties man encounters in the course of his development, the efforts he has to make along the Way, the suffering and hardship he has to endure and so on – all these ideas arose when the method was lost. They may belong to some other Way, they have nothing to do with this one...

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All we need is the prick of individual Conscience to bring that Memory of the one essential thing we keep forgetting. Until Conscience is strong in us, we are encouraged to make use of the good company of others in the Work and to dwell on the words and examples of Fully Realized Men. So we will conclude this term with some of the words of the original Shankara, the man who went straight through the Gate of Liberation into the Temple of the Goddess of Wisdom:

For living beings, human birth is hard to gain, then manhood, then holiness. Harder yet is perfection in the path of the Law of Wisdom; hardest to gain is illumination.

Discernment between Self and that which is not Self, fully realized union with the Eternal, this is not attained without holiness perfected through a hundred myriad lives.

These three things, hard to gain, manhood, desire for liberation, access to the Masters – come only through Divine Grace. Gaining at length human life, hard to win, and manhood and understanding of revealed Teachings – he who strives not for liberation – deluded – slays himself through grasping the unreal.

Who then is the Fool? He who, deluded in heart, follows selfish purposes after he has gained a human body and manhood hard to win.

Shankaracharya

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When would we ever get this Grace again if we don't do the very little we have to do here and now, today and tomorrow? This is the chance not only of a lifetime but probably of many lifetimes. That quotation has an added poignancy for some of us because Mr. Ouspensky told the man who showed it to him once at Lyne, that if he could understand *that*, he would know much about recurrence. There's very much you haven't heard, too, that the present Shankaracharya has been saying in the same vein and on the same subject.

But that we must leave till after the holidays. A happy Christmas to you all, and a New Year full of promise!

Try to put this thought into practice – not only when you are sitting still, but when your body is moving around:

Truly it is said, 'Quietness, stillness... these are the balancers of Heaven and Earth, the very substance of the Way and its Power, ... the Wise Man rests therein, and because he rests, he is at peace. Because he is at peace, he is quiet.' One who is at peace and is quiet no sorrow or harm can enter, no evil breath can invade. Therefore his inner power remains whole and his spirit intact... He that can achieve such wholeness, such integrity we call a True Man.

Chuang Tzu

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