

29 November 1965

READING 8

In the detailed description you had last week of the Seven steps of the Ladder, the 5th Step was described as that where no attachment or identification remains and man starts looking at things as they really are.

During our recent talks, the Shankaracharya described a well-tryed means of achieving this through a radical change in our point of view. We can train ourselves to regard Creation as a great play or Drama for the pleasure of the Creator.

At the risk of repetition, may we give you the words which began this new line:

19th October 1965 (Record p.45)

The Creator created the Universe in all its different aspects and forms. He observes the Drama which He has created. All those who take part in this play, knowing its mystery and essence, are detached. They play their part and enjoy it. Those who do not know its mystery become identified with their parts and are bound by them; once lose their identification, and they too can enjoy playing their part in the Grand Drama without being bound. A story illustrates this:

There was a man from the country on a visit to his city relatives. To entertain him, the relatives took him to the cinema. They bought expensive tickets in the back row, but their country cousin was insulted at being put in the back row and insisted that they sit in the very front. All went well until a lion appeared on the screen and suddenly looked as if it would jump at the audience. Our friend had his stick and struck at the lion to defend himself. The screen was broken and the film stopped, and the whole place was thrown into darkness and confusion. At first no one could understand what had happened; then they realised that in the audience was a man who had never been to a cinema before and took the film to be real!

The same applies to those ignorant people who regard what goes on in the world as real, and become identified and involved, leading to foolish actions! When the real significance of the Grand Drama is discovered, these people can play their part with detachment and enjoyment (and without causing trouble).

A. (p.47) Are there any roles which are particularly difficult to play, and if they are played with detachment do the actors get a special reward?

S. This play is a pleasant play – there are no difficult parts. Difficulties come when actors through ignorance take the play to be real. Then even ordinary acts become big and terrifying and cause fright and panic; or if the act is pleasurable, then these ignorant actors become infatuated by pleasure.

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S. (p.29) When you look at Creation and see everything as an observer, then you start getting glimpses: that I am not the ego, but the ego belongs to me; the Manas, the body, or the chair *is not* my *Self*, but *for* myself; when you see everything as the observer, then you get a glimpse of the True Self, and when this becomes permanent that would be Self-realization.

(Pause for discussion)

It gradually emerged that one could approach the Drama of Creation by two paths – by Knowledge or by Love; but not at our stage by both simultaneously, for that comes at the top (Cosmic Consciousness):

R. (p.51) Does it help a man to study the great world of the stars and the little world within himself?

S. Knowledge of the higher and inner worlds is valuable, for by knowing the Laws of those worlds one can escape from them. Knowledge of this kind is always good, but one should be careful that it is complete. A little knowledge is dangerous; nearly all the mistakes made are through limited knowledge.

Some don't need Knowledge for they go by the Emotional path. Someone can tell them about this and off they go. They do not need to acquire that Knowledge by study as do those who follow the Path of Knowledge. (More on this will follow later).

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25th October (Record p.81)

R. Would you tell us some more about the idea of the Drama of Creation as a means of developing detachment?

S. The Creator starts the Creation as a play with the help of Maya ('Nature'). The relationship of the Creator and Maya is the same as that which is the relation of an individual (Atman) to ignorance. The ignorance is a shadow of Maya, just as the individual is a reflection of the Absolute. The Absolute plays with Maya and knows it to be a play and thus amuses Himself; the individual doesn't know that because of ignorance. So he has to take recourse to True Knowledge. With this True Knowledge – which again is all about the play of Maya – he gets to know the Maya, and then he understands that all the play of the Three Gunas in the Universe is only a drama. The knowledge of this is True Knowledge... In the story[†] of Rama and his brother Lakshman, Lakshman (Buddhi) was living in Knowledge, but he had a curiosity and a desire to see how the common people in the world lived in this ignorance. So it was just for a little while that Rama showed him how the common man lives, how he gets involved with Maya and treats Maya as Truth. It was a little show for Lakshman arranged by Rama, just to give him a taste of what life in the world is like.

R. I seem to have a sensation of coming out of meditation into Maya like Lakshman diving into the water, and then in meditation like coming out of Maya again.

S. This observation is very important, and will lead to clarification of yourself. This is seeing things as they are. He quoted a passage from Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter 2) which means that a disciple keeps awake while the world sleeps, and sleeps when the common men seem to be awake and active. The idea is that the common men are asleep to the Conscious world, while the disciple closes his eyes to events in the material world.

He also told a story from the Ramayana (which we must postpone as it is a little difficult to understand).

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On another occasion R. quoted a verse from the Maitri Upanishad (Record p.87):

Creation (Samsara) takes place in one's own mind. Let a man therefore keep his Mind pure, for what a man thinks, that he becomes.

S. The Samsara (Creation) takes place in one's own mind – in Buddhi – and is seen by

it, experienced by it, and again dissolved in it. If the Buddhi is pure and clean, then the appearance of Creation is pure, still and clean and his experiences are pure and clean. If the Buddhi is impure, changeable and dirty, the Creation appears impure and dirty and becomes a source of suffering. So it is up to everyone to still and purify the Buddhi, so that the Creation is experienced in its purity and its goodness.

R. I was going to ask that if *desires* arise in the Manas, 'What is the *loving* mind, and where in a man does Love arise?'

S. The ordinary desires arise from the Manas, but *the Centre of Love is the Atman*. It is from the Atman that Love arises; although it also is expressed through Manas, which is the agency for expression of all desires.

R. (p.90) A Christian Saint (Augustine) once said: 'A man becomes what he loves. If he loves a stone he becomes a stone; if he loves mankind, he becomes a Man, and if he loves God... I dare not say more for you might stone me.'

S. replies that, according to his System, this would mean: if you worship a stone *as a stone*, you become a stone. But if you worship the stone as a manifestation of the Creator, then you become the Creator himself. For there is no reality like a mere separate stone in this Creation. The stone is one form of the same force which permeates everything in creation; it is the same force working through men, vegetation or minerals. All that we see – the Creation, the stone, the man, and everything is not real. The Reality behind everything is the same threefold, Sat, Chit, Ananda – Truth, pure Consciousness, and Happiness. Once you have purified Buddhi and removed the limitation of the eyes in ignorance, you would be able to see that Truth, Consciousness and Happiness even in the stone.

(Pause for Discussion)

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Finally, to return to the Fifth Step of the Ladder, the importance of detachment came out in another question and answer:

R. (p.82) At Step No.5 or high up the Ladder, would the Consciousness be capable of remembering the previous life?

S. The Step No.5 on the Ladder of Self-realization is a step where old influences of the past would seem to have died down completely. Those influences are by now washed and cleansed away so they don't exist any longer. In their place new influences have made their home and these new influences are of a different order.

There are two types of influences that are accumulated in the Essence – one leading towards activity, and the other leading towards non-activity. Again, there are (as we have said) two kinds of activity, one useful or good and the other useless or bad. The bad have by then been washed away by this discipline; and because the new influences have come in, the bad cannot arise because they no longer exist there. So that at Stage No.5 there would be no question of remembering anything about what has passed away.

Q. from London (p.49): Does the mantra remain with us in the next life? Supposing we don't escape from the wheel in this life and have to return, will the mantra still be there?

S. This is a defeatist attitude. There is no rule that people will have realization in the next life or after that. But why consider such a far away thing? Why not this life?

This is the great opportunity. Seize it. Try to realize your Self *now*; don't look beyond, it is unnecessary. A question like this means that we only just want a sample without the full experience. Never postpone. There exists no law of the Creator that people can't have Realization in this life, so don't think about the next!

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All this refers directly to that difficult sentence in our Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our trespasses' or (as it is in Latin): 'Dismiss from us our debts' – but it's here and now in this very life!

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†NOTE: In case you've forgotten it, the story of Rama and Lakshman (Allahabad 1962, p.74) was as follows:

Time varies according to the measure (of Consciousness). He gives an illustration:

Lakshman, the brother of Rama, told him that he would like to see the great illusion of Maya – the Maya which Rama was always talking about. Rama replied: 'You will get into trouble through seeing it, so I shouldn't bother about it.' Lakshman replied: 'I'm quite sure it won't affect me, and I'm still curious to see it.' So Rama said, 'All right, you'll see it by and by,' and left the question open. They went to the river to bathe. When they had finished bathing and both were coming ashore, Rama said, 'My brother, I've lost my ring, do you think you could dive for it?' He went and dived for the ring; at that moment he lost his consciousness. When he came out of the water, he was in a different land, it was a beautiful countryside. He met there a beautiful woman, and they settled down together, established a house and lived like householders. He begot four sons; and when he became an old man he caught malarial fever, developed a cough and eventually died. Then his sons took him to the river, as the custom was, to immerse his body in the water; and as the body submerged, at that moment Lakshman again came out of the water, and out of Maya. He went to Rama with tears in his eyes and repentance in his heart, but still didn't remember what had happened. But Rama said to him, 'You wanted to experience Maya, Illusion. Now you have the experience.'

All the differentiation of time and space which we calculate in this world, is the illusion. In the Atman or in Brahma, there is no time, there is no space, it's all *One*. We see a distorted effect of all this in our worldly consciousness or sleep. The differentiation of time is illusion, for it is (as I said at the beginning) *always different*, because it is illusion.

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