

7 February 1966

READING 3

'OBSERVATION'

PART 1

Several interpretations of the story on page 6 (1966/2) have reached me; but so far I haven't heard anyone give the practical meaning which results from observing that all this often happens to one during a half-hour. As usual, the 'Holy Man' is oneSelf – Buddhi reflecting Atman; all the disciples or followers are different 'I's or groups of 'I's. When in meditation no results seem to come, ('No audience today'), the more indifferent of these 'I's get bored and go away. That leaves the more persistent ones free to go on meditating without expecting or demanding; and then suddenly the doors may be opened and the audience with Atman is held.

These stories of the 'Holy Man' also show us how this special kind of *observation* feels – 'seeing with the eye of Atman'. It gives 'glimpses of the Truth' – not partial or half-truths, but the pure undifferentiated Truth about oneself and therefore about Universal Laws. Here is a description given us recently:

The Knowledge in the Absolute (Brahma) and the Self (Atman) is always the same. The Atman within the individual has that part of the Knowledge which belongs to Brahma. If by analogy the True Knowledge were thought to be stored in the Absolute, the individual would reflect some of it.

The worldly activities, the daily struggle for a living, all our desires and volitions create certain obstacles (partitions and skins); and due to the habit of being involved in them, we forget the True Knowledge. Those people who educate us for the worldly life, lead us to *differentiated knowledge* and to the mechanical routine which brings it about, so that for some time we cease to have direct access to the *Undifferentiated* (Universal) Knowledge that rightly belongs to us.

At times when you come across some people who maintain that connection, the impulse from them reminds you once again. The memory of that experience being always present, when frequently aroused it would become impossible to forget in this life. Forgetting is in fact a property of us human beings; the Absolute never forgets, for if He did, all mediums of communication would come to an end. Once aroused, you may not make much effort – that's a different matter – but you will at least recognise that the True Knowledge is there within you. It is up to you to take action (to realize it more constantly) or not.

For example, if you stand under a tree by a river and gaze at the flowing water, you will experience the feeling that you are moving and the water is still.

But if you look away from the river, then you will find that, in fact, you are not moving, and it is only the water that is in movement.

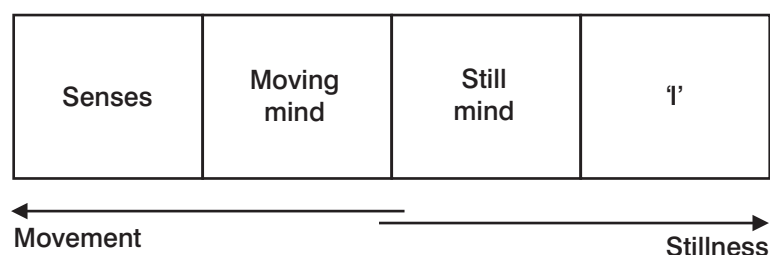


Figure 1

The same applies to our relationship with the world. When we turn our attention within, then we (gradually) find stability in ourselves and can observe (with detachment) the movement in the world. But if we get involved with the world, then we lose our stability, and find the world stable and ourselves making all the movements of activity.

(21 October 1965)

*

PART 2

What Simple Truths does this kind of observation give us? A story on this subject was told us on a previous visit :

Once a Holy man was travelling. Towards evening he passed a palatial residence, so he asked the door-keeper if he could stay the night there. The door-keeper consulted his employer who came and said angrily: 'This isn't a hotel or inn where people drop in for a short time and move on!'

The Holy Man asked him, 'Who built this palace?'

'My father,' came the answer.

'Now you own the palace?'

'Yes, I am the owner.'

'Who will own it after you?'

'My sons,' said the owner.

'And after your sons, who then?'

'My grandsons.'

'After all,' commented the Holy Man, 'this *does* look rather like an inn! People seem to come and stay for a while and then move on. Wouldn't you really call it an inn? Had all this belonged to your father, he could certainly have taken it with him when he left.'

The man who lived in the house suddenly realised what was wrong with him. As long as the True Observer (Atman) is covered over with this state of ignorance; as long as man makes claims like that, he will not remember, will not unite. When one realizes the Truth, one breaks down this barrier and unites with the Absolute.

Q. The Creator has provided everything that one needs. Why is it that when one tries to remember Him, there is a barrier?

S. Atman is a part of Brahma, the Absolute. Absolute creates Maya (the drama and scenery of Creation); but Atman is surrounded by ignorance which is a shadow of Maya.

The Absolute is limitless, the giver of all; He never claims anything for Himself, for '*He is*.' Atman is separated from Him only by our ignorance: that's why we make limits, boundaries; we 'possess' and we claim. But all this is ignorance. Absolute created the boundless Universe and we create boundaries – 'this is *my* land, this is *my* country.' In fact, land belongs to no-one; it changes hands, you can claim it for a time, but in the end you have to leave everything behind. *He* creates Mankind; *man* creates the Indian and the English. The Creation is Consciousness, but we see it only in coarse material form, because of illusion in our state of ignorance.

(3 September 1964)

COMMENT

With the above story in mind, scores of examples can rise from the memory to show us how this illusion of *personal possession* gives rise to many of our troubles. Here are just a few:

1. This is *my* body, I am free to misuse it as much as I like. But our System has this aphorism: 'Prepare to die tomorrow, but look after your body as if it had to live a hundred years.'
2. This is *my* life. I can do what I like with it; even gamble away or end my life, if I want to. But in fact your life belongs to the Atman, who has assigned a role for you to play.
3. These are *my* children. They must adopt the career I choose, and believe what I believe. But in fact the children are not ours. If parents would regard the children as lent to them to love and protect till they find themSelves; then those children at teen age might be more grateful to the parents, and in due course repay!
4. Madame Ouspensky used to remind us that even material objects are not just our property. 'What right have you,' she would say, 'to throw that towel on the floor? In objective state you would have consideration for the towel and put it where it rightly belongs.'

You may recall the Zen story of the follower who spilt some of the water when filling his Master's bath. 'You dunce!', shouted the Master, 'What right have you to waste even a drop of water in this Temple?' In that moment the student attained Satori – Enlightenment. He changed his name to 'Teki-Sui' – 'drop of water'.

CONCLUSION

Having stilled the Buddhi and stored up Sattva, we can in contemplation observe our current attitudes and cultivate the new attitude which comes from the Atman.

For a New Attitude is quite quickly formed and is the first big change to be made; and that at once changes many other things.

* * *

