

11 December 1967

## READING 8

In an early talk on this visit the five veils (described in the *Crest Jewel* by the first Shankara) had been discussed. These are the illusions which obscure the answer to the question 'Who am I?'. Only when all five have been destroyed can a man merge with the Atman. We all worked on these veils for a week, and at the end of the visit the following talk took place:

### 4.11.67 (1)

A. At a certain stage in the development of meditation there seems to be a barrier blocking final unity. Is this illusion? If so, can one destroy it? If not, how can one overcome the barrier?

S. The last barrier to the Atman is Ahankar, the feeling of 'I' – 'I' the one who is meditating, or I am the one who is about to go over the barrier into the unity. As long as one sticks to this the unity is impossible. We have to learn this and make sure in our self that when one reaches to a spot of this nature, one should drop even the idea of the feeling of 'I'. Everything is to be given up even the sense of 'I'. Once the sense or feeling of 'I' is given up, then only the unity is possible.

A certain man went to a Holy man to be initiated in meditation. He was asked as to what things he saw on the way. He said that among all those things I saw I remember a donkey very well. He was then asked to remove him from his memory. The poor man tried hard, but failed, and expressed his inability to do so. The Holy man said that the art is to drop the memory. This memory or the feeling of 'I' is the greatest and the last barrier to meditation. The man who meditates or the man who observes must be dropped so that one is able to merge into one.

(2) R. It was possible in the night (remembering the story of the arrow-maker) to have no *movement* for quite a long time, but still the feeling of 'I' remained there in the stillness.

S. When one knows that one is still, one is not still, and when one knows one is at peace, one is still away from it, because the great barrier is still there to recognise 'I' and its relation with peace and stillness. In complete peace or stillness there is no 'I'.

Brihaspati is the Teacher (Guru) of all the Devas (Gods). His son Kach was sent to Ashram for study. He was taught the Vedas and the Shastras, and also the Upanishads. The essence of all his knowledge was that he should give up everything to be at peace. When he came home he did not start any work, so his father asked him as to why he is sitting there lazily. He said that I have realised from reading the Vedas, Shastras and Upanishads that to be at peace one must give up everything, so I have decided to give up my work to remain happy. Father said to him that he was still enjoying being in the house and the services of the servants, so he left house and went to the forest to live alone in nature. But when he found that he was not in peace, then he asked his father for advice. Father said again that perhaps there was something else which he could give up. The son gave up the tree under which he lived and also threw away his garments and moved around the banks of Ganges. Even then he was not at complete peace, so he thought that his body should also be given up and he collected wood and lit a fire and was about to jump into it. His father came out from the hiding place and asked him to answer a few questions before giving up his body. The father said that according to nature

and your being you will have another body when you have left this one by burning. This means you will take one for another, and this cycle will go on till eternity. Should you then give up this body? The son was puzzled, and asked his father for guidance. Then his father said to him that to give up all, you have only to give up the feeling of giving up. This, your Ahankar, who is trying to give up everything else, is still with you. Once you give up Ahankar, then there is nothing yours which is to give up.

R. It seems to take a long, long time! Some people perhaps are more egoistic than others. (S. laughs.)

(3) A. What is it that gives up? What is it that surrenders?

S. That which is never absent from anywhere.

(4) A. And part of that substance is in me?

S. Yes. A part of that substance is within you and also that you are within it. It is like the water of the Ganges and Ganges water in a bottle. Break the bottle and there is no individual trace of that water when mixed in Ganges. As long as we associate the Self with the body, senses, Manas, Buddhi, desire or the feeling of 'I' (Ahankar), we are separated and bottled up. Cut out Ahankar and there is no separation.

(5) R. I hoped there could be a peaceful co-existence like this quotation from the *Mundaka* Upanishad: (Book 3, 1)

There are two birds, two dear friends, who live on the self-same tree. The one pecks at the sweet fruit, while the other looks on in silence, not eating. The first is the human spirit who feels sad and bound in by ignorance. But on beholding the Power and Glory of the Universal made of the same substance as himself, he becomes free from sorrow.

(S. smiles and quotes the passage in the Sanskrit poetry.)

S. They certainly co-exist as long as they are sitting on the tree of creation and one of them is enjoying the fruit of the tree. These two sweet friends are the Absolute and the Atman. The Atman is involved with the creation and its fruits. It feels as if it is seeing, eating, sensing and enjoying the world, and in doing so gets attached with the world, whereas the Absolute, although in and with the creation, is in no way involved with the creation and only watches and enjoys. One does not see and understand that the changes take place in the Prakriti and not in the Atman. Atman is not subject to change. If it were, it could never be liberated and then the Prakriti would have been absolute which is impossible. One who understands this becomes very light and walks in freedom without carrying the load of the world. He is one who enjoys the drama in true sense and never associates himself with the characters of the drama. Our job is simply to watch and enjoy.

(6) A. Is one entitled to ask for help or should one trust the Teacher to know one's need and act as necessary?

S. The Teacher full of Grace knows the difficulties and picks up the message and comes to the rescue without being asked. The impatient disciple when he gets excited with the so-called difficulties jumps up to seize the nearest opportunity to ask for help. Even then he gets the help no doubt. Best is not to ask, because whatever is necessary will always be provided by the Teacher.

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