

29 June 1970

## READING 8

### UNITY (continued)

#### Further quotations from the Shankaracharya

The nature of the Essence (repeating through many cycles of lives) makes up our attitude. With the power of discrimination is also made available True Knowledge to discriminate from the untrue. It is only because of such advantages provided for the human form that man is made responsible for his actions. This discrimination is the work of the subtle body ('Mind and heart'); this body works on a different scale of time and space, and only because of this can it come about that one redeems the faults of previous lives or accumulates error to suffer punishment through all those lives again.

The subtle body is chiefly affected by the company one lives with. With good company one may redeem, and with bad company may work one's way to hell. Even in animal forms, when the subtle body of pet animals gets closely related to human beings through affection, then it will equally be possible for a pet animal to move up to the human form quickly.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it was said that whatever one longs for at the moment of death, one will get in the next life. It is only the most deeply cherished idea that would cross your mind at such a moment; and so one has to work hard to cherish a good idea above all others. This also is done by the subtle body; and in a way anything is possible for the subtle body.

(20 September 1968)

(Pause for discussion)

R. Does good company mean a group of people, aspirants for Self-realization, and going the same way? Among these some seem to be more useful to the Leader than others. One type says, 'Oh! how well you talk and I believe everything you say', and another kind, whom I value more and who ask such questions as, 'Do you really understand what you talk so "well" about; are you speaking from your experience or is it borrowed.?' Could such kinds of good company be inside one as well as outside one?

S. The good company is also of three kinds. There are some people who have little Sattva within and they naturally respond enough at least to appreciate the good words they hear. Due to lack of enough Sattva they fall short and neither raise questions nor practise the Teaching. This is the coarsest part of the good company. The second kind raises questions because they think about keeping the Teaching pure and making it more practical, and also make efforts to practise the Teaching.

But the question you have quoted may be answered thus: The True Knowledge belongs to everyone and in fact everyone knows the Truth, but in this phase of creation it has been forgotten. So the Knowledge has always to be passed from one to the other. Accordingly this Tradition also has acquired it because it was passed from the Creator and continued to this day. One has to inherit, be instructed and then pass it on. Thus although it is always borrowed, yet it is in truth one's own. There is of course a danger in knowing that it is one's own knowledge, that some may become proud and claim. This would make them incapable of appreciating further and finer subjects.

The third kind of good company inherits in full and brings True Knowledge into full practice (of creative thinking).

There was a certain man who deposited his treasure of four drums full of gold coins underground in a spot where the highest point of the temple's shadow fell on a particular time and day of the year. He wrote a note in his will that on such and such a date and time he has deposited his treasure under the zenith of the temple. After his death, the sons tried to acquire the wealth. They even dismantled the top of the temple but all was in vain. They also consulted others but for a long time nothing came out. One day a Holy man came to their house, to whom they told their worry. He asked to look at the note and then advised them to call him a day before the date mentioned in the note, meanwhile to restore the temple in full and exactly as it was. On the appointed day and time he took them to the spot where the shadow fell and told them to dig and unearth the treasure.

All this shows that there are three kinds of good company. First is the physical which only hears and appreciates, the other is of knowledge which analyses and tries to practise, and the third is the truth or company of the Self which knows and practises and can show the way, for they hold the keys to all problems. This is mostly received directly through the Tradition.

(14 September 1968)

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