

19 October 1970

## READING 4

## PART 1

A funny thing happened last week. During all those talks about 'mirages' somebody actually and demonstrably woke up! The occasion I know about happened at Mrs. Moore's small meeting, though of course there may have been other examples which wouldn't be apparent in the written reports. Here is Mrs. Moore's account:

We brought up the story of Lakshman and Rama to help us to understand illusion, or Maya. When Lakshman regained consciousness after dying in Maya, and wept with joy on being reunited with his brother, Miss B. suddenly said, 'I see, I see – he had led a good life in Maya, but he had forgotten his brother!' (his connection with his source). And she said how often, when she has come out of some particular identification, she gets the feeling of having been lost or dead.

This made everyone perk up, and we could easily see the illusion in identification. But we get lost when people want chapter and verse as to what is real and what is not real.

We know very well the truth of *something* in our lives, and we know that even in this dream it matters how we think and how we behave.

So until we understand something from experience, I get the feeling that we too easily drag an idea down in trying to fit it logically into our relative life.

We could all take this good advice. In a message later relayed to me about that story, His Holiness said 'he was glad you felt relieved to know that *both* the worlds which Lakshman experienced were illusory. But,' he added laughingly, 'the seer of the two worlds was real.' This reiterates that the only reality in the Universe is Consciousness and we shouldn't believe in anything else.

He has often assured us that we can do nothing about the mirage while we are totally hypnotised by it; all we can do is to come out of it twice a day into the presence of the Atman. Yet the mere fact of *knowing* (and sometimes remembering) that our bodily and mental life is unreal, can prevent us from doing ridiculous things, and making dreadful mistakes like getting into 'bad company'.

It would also help to understand otherwise insoluble problems like Eternal Recurrence.

## PART 2. ETERNAL RECURRENCE

In answering a question about Recurrence earlier this year he said:

From all these considerations one can see the validity of the idea; but it would be very difficult to establish a direct link between the physical and the subtle world by verbal description.

There are only three ways to establish this validity. The first is the Shastras, the Knowledge which is said to be the outcome of Divine utterances (like the Gospels and the *Upanishads*). If the Shastras say it, then we believe in it. Secondly, we gather the proofs ourselves, and through inferences may establish the levels of the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies, above which is the Atman that pervades everywhere.

Thirdly, in rare cases a Divine vision is given even nowadays to certain individuals; only *they* can transcend the limits of these physical boundaries, see through the limits of the subtle world and get direct information through insight. It is usually in these three ways that some knowledge about Recurrence is made available to individuals in this world.

(28 January 1970)

The following passage from the *Life of Ramakrishna* (p.777), the principal seer of the nineteenth century, gives us an example:

Ramakrishna, among his intimate disciples, once said in an ecstatic mood: ‘Why doesn’t man’s mind dwell on God? You see, more powerful than God is His great Maya, His power of illusion. It’s like saying that ‘more powerful than the judge is his orderly!’ (laughter).

Rama said to Narada: ‘I am very pleased with your prayer. Ask me a boon.’ Narada replied, ‘O Rama, may I have pure devotion to your lotus feet, and may I not be deluded by your world – bewitching Maya!’ Rama said, ‘Be it so; now ask for something more! But Narada replied, ‘No, Rama I don’t want any other boon but that!

Everyone is under the spell of this world – bewitching mirage. Even when God assumes a human body, He too comes under the spell, as when Rama wandered about weeping for his lady-love Sita... But while Divine incarnations can liberate themselves whenever they want to, yet ordinary beings cannot. When the doors and windows of a room are fastened with screws, how can a man get out?

The Shankaracharya’s talk on Recurrence continued:

From all this it is possible to come to the realisation that the physical body is a limited world. This limited world has no validity, no means of establishing a relationship directly with the subtle world except through inferences derived from knowledge, or by experience of the Atman through the causal world in the stillness. This is the most reasonable point of view which one can trust. The happy and satisfied lead a good life in this world and extend this goodness into other lives through other worlds.

He then proceeded to explain in detail how this can be done by the way of Self-knowledge. We can go on to that in ensuing weeks if you wish to.

\* \* \*