

1 November 1971

READING 4

We thought that you would be interested to discuss part of last Monday's meeting taken here by Mr. Allan. It seemed to me remarkable that he was speaking to the senior people in London on just the same theme that I used with the senior people in the New York group. I even told them the same story from the Shankaracharya with which the quotation begins.

We ask everybody to apply this amusing story to themselves. Almost the chief obstacle to our whole work on Self-realization and to our individual meditations at present, is the universal habit of the human mind to get hold of some problem and go over it endlessly, thereby forgetting oneSelf and wasting precious energy, even to the point of lying awake at night over it. The cure is to take the mind firmly away from this useless activity to the *Param-Atman*, which is *above all problems*. By substituting this good habit for the bad, one will find not only that most of the problems are irrelevant or non-existent, but also see a solution for the real ones.

Mr. Allan to Dr. David Connell: 'This year, in a talk that was sent to you and which was given to people in his Ashram, His Holiness said this:

Gokarna says in the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*: 'This body is only flesh and bones: cease to be attached to it.' Transfer your attachment to the Atman. Because Atman is part of the Param-Atman, there is no difference between the two. Both are able to cut worldly entanglements.

This body is the vehicle and the Atman is the rider. Treat the rider separately from the vehicle. It is not easy to do so. It requires years of practice. We practise by thinking this body is God's property, not ours. This mind is God's property, not ours. Everything is God's and nothing is ours. In this way, we free ourselves from all attachments, all constraints. Again, this concept is difficult for those who think that 'I' is the physical body.'

Then he tells a story:

A Mahatma (shall we call him a super group-taker?) wished to live in complete solitude, in order that he could meditate undisturbed at all times. He recounted his wish to a rich man. The rich man had an isolated rest-house deep in the forest, rarely visited by mankind. He offered the rest-house to the Mahatma, and in addition provided a young servant to look after his comforts.

The young servant looked after his master so well that his heart was moved. He asked the young servant if he was content with his life, and if he could do anything to bring him happiness. The young man replied that he himself was content and happy, but he was afraid that his dead father had not achieved Self-realization as he was frequently appearing in his dreams. He asked the Mahatma for a remedy.

During the ensuing nights, the Mahatma was haunted by the problem of the young man's father. One evening, the boy went to a neighbouring village to attend a marriage feast, telling the Mahatma that he would not return until the following morning. So the Mahatma locked up the house and went to bed. Now, the young servant's bed was beside that of the Mahatma; and lay empty.

The Mahatma's mind was filled with thoughts about the young man's father, and the failure to achieve Self-realization. He was quite unable to sleep in peace.

The marriage feast was over by midnight, so the boy returned to the house immediately instead of waiting until the morning. When he got back, he climbed over the wall and through the window and fell asleep on his own bed.

At 3.30 in the morning, the Mahatma awoke and saw the bed was occupied. In the darkness he thought that the occupant must be the boy's father (who had been haunting his son's dreams because he had not achieved Self-realization). He recited holy Mantras and sprinkled blessed water over the body, but the boy did not wake up as he was in so deep a sleep. Now the Mahatma became frightened out of his wits. He opened the window and jumped out in order to get away. In his haste, he fell over with a heavy thud. The noise awakened the young servant. He chased after the Mahatma with a heavy staff thinking that he was a burglar escaping. Eventually they recognised each other before many blows were sustained, and the misunderstanding was cleared up.

And he goes on:

In such a way, just a momentary thought, stealing unconsciously into the mind, will make its home there! Then it appears later at some inopportune moment to cause much mischief! Reels and reels of such thoughts from thousands of years (in many lifetimes) are lying printed on our minds. They will not let us have peace, unless we develop the same attachment towards God as we have towards the world.

(Record, 1 May 1971)

R.A. Then there was quite a good discussion at Dr. Fenwick's meeting. Is he here? (No).

Meeting Report

Dr. Fenwick spoke about the importance of attitude and how, while interviewing some Borstal boys, he had seen that their attitude limited their world. He said how we needed to go on cultivating an attitude until it became natural, and the change of attitude brought chemical changes.

Mr. Kindersley said that if there were chemical changes, these would last quite a long time.

Mr. Kindersley also said that the examples we were talking of were extremes, and that there was a whole order of experiences which are not quite one or the other.

R.A. I would have liked Dr. Fenwick to have gone on talking on those lines; it is very interesting.

Mr. Koren's and Mr. Griffith's Meetings

Miss Metcalfe: The idea of the strength one has, helped her. She was feeling very nervous starting a new job and remembered the idea of Param-Atman, and immediately felt more confident and capable.

R.A. This was what Dr. Roles was saying the other day – that we should remember our *invincibility*.

I would like to end tonight by reading a few sentences of what the Shankaracharya said when the idea was put to him that we might not reach Self-realization in this life:

This is a defeatist attitude. There is no rule that people will have

Realization in the next life or after that. But why consider that? Why not this life? This is the great opportunity. Seize it. Try to realize yourSelf now, don't look beyond, it is unnecessary. A question like this means that we just want a sample without the full experience. There is no need to postpone. There is no law of the Creator that people can't have realization in this life, so don't think about it.'

So this is the opportunity for us to seize here and now – tonight.

Mrs. H. Caiger-Smith (room, as repeated): About that chemical change: very often it seemed that I was always saying 'I must remember the Param-Atman' or 'I have not remembered the Param-Atman'; but this week it came to me 'I am remembering the Param-Atman!'

R.A. Yes, this is the whole thing – to get this idea going, to keep the continuity.

Mrs. C.S. It is rather like having to keep the mirror clear?

R.A. To keep it clear we have to remove the impurities of the 'sheaths.'

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So instead of getting lost in our habitual 'reverberating circuits', we just get into the way of remembering ourSelves in the wider sphere of Param-Atman, and this at once brings simple and practical results. Several observations at your meetings (as in New York) show that quite a lot of us are getting profit from this. Here is just one from the Central Group:

Lord Wyfold was in the chair at a meeting awaiting the arrival of an elderly man who was generally expected to oppose what was going to be discussed. He was half-an-hour late, and everyone was getting very angry as they all had other appointments. Lord Wyfold suddenly remembered the idea of Param-Atman and said something light like, 'Well – none of this will matter in a hundred years', and the whole atmosphere changed.

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