

22 November 1971

READING 6

In response to many requests, we give you in this week's paper a short passage from last Monday's meeting at Colet House as follows:

Quite a few people have been seeing in the Three Gunas, the most practical guide for day-to-day use, if one can learn to use this method of observation.

We were given a clear and practical description back in 1970 which we haven't taken any further in relation to the questions we are now asking:

If we look at the 'Causal Level' at the top of last week's diagram, we may suppose that at the edge of the circle we are connected with the world around us through our sense organs. Through them we get a kind of reflected light – but very limited and distorted images result from it. The true Light shines from the Atman within. How to get this light to shine all through our souls?

That is our chief question at present. Can we apply this description?:

When one has the feeling of 'ego', one always senses a limitation, a circle created by this feeling of ego. Whatever happens, whether under the dominance of Sattva or Rajas or Tamas, there will still have to be *some* limitation, but those limitations differ by their nature. If Rajas or Tamas predominates, the feeling of 'I' will be determined by whatever one thinks of one's body or one's status, one's knowledge or one's material welfare. So one can come to limit one's 'I' to one's own body or one's own knowledge or good character or brilliance, or intellect or kind heart, or unselfishness, or whatever one imagines one has.

These are small circles created by the Ahankar and therefore are extremely limited. The other feeling of 'I' which is dominated by Sattva is related to the Universal 'I' – Param-Atman.

If one accepts the limitations as *imposed upon* the Atman, then one is not possessed by Rajas or Tamas, is not attracted to the action or the outcome that one has grown to associate with performing certain actions. So when the feeling of 'me and mine' arises in relation to anything in the universe, the feeling of 'I' will be governed by Rajas and Tamas. On the contrary, if this feeling is derived from 'Thee and Thine', then all activities or all vantage grounds to which the individual 'I' can rise, will be of service to him and humanity...

So if one forms the mental attitude that everything available to the individual belongs in reality to the Universal Self, the individual being only an instrument in performing glorious activities, then the 'I' will be dominated by Sattva. If one has the attitude that all situations belong to the Father of All, then the germ of Rajasic or Tamasic ego will not penetrate the individual, and he will consider himself to be only smaller compared with what has gone before. In the same way, one should always consider all the glory which becomes available to individuals to belong to the Param-Atman, and we in our activities will be merely instrumental in putting this glory into effect in the world. This is the right attitude, and through this, the self-pride (false ego) will not penetrate the nature of the individual. Then one can keep working on the Ladder of Self-realization.

(Record, 30 January 1970, partly re-written)

As with many of the Shankaracharya's descriptions, this also can be taken *both* in relation to our external lives from day-to-day, and in relation to a half-hour's meditation. Remembering that in meditation all intellectual activity must be avoided, and that one proceeds by a sort of inner 'taste' (with attention on the rhythm) from mental activity to the peace in which the Father of All can show Himself, you might like to meditate together now for five or ten minutes. The 'inner taste' now can be related to the Gunas: activity, tension, effort, betokens Rajas (heat); laziness, physical sleep, and an inattentive posture, to Tamas (cold). Gradually the third Guna (Sattva) may become apparent in a kind of yearning of love for that miraculous Presence. This leads naturally to the one-pointed attention that is truly 'meditation'.

*

To increase the concentration of this light-giving energy of Sattva, you may like to listen to two quotations:

1. from the *Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*, p.1009:

Ramakrishna: 'It isn't easy to have the vision of Govinda (Krishna). You must have noticed in the Krishna play-cycle that Narada enters the magic forest of Vrindavan and prays with great yearning: 'O Govinda! O my Soul! O life of my life!', and only then does Krishna come on to the stage with the cowherd boys followed by the milkmaids (humble, simple 'I's). No one can see the Param-Atman without that yearning.'

2. The other quote (chosen, so appropriately, by de Lotbinière for his meeting last week) is from the *Hymn of Jesus*, and gives such a clear distinction between the physical, subtle and Causal levels:

Thus, my beloved, having danced with us,
The Lord went forth.
And we, as though beside ourselves,
Or wakened out of deep sleep,
Fled each our several ways.

I, then, when I saw him suffer,
Did not even stay by his sufferings,
But fled unto the Mount of Olives,
Weeping at that which had befallen.

And when he was crucified on the Friday,
At the sixth hour of the day,
Darkness came upon all the earth.

My Lord standing in the midst of the cave,
And lighting it up, said:
'John, unto the multitude below in Jerusalem
I am being crucified,
And pierced with lances and reeds,

And gall and vinegar is given me to drink.
 But unto thee I speak,
 And what I speak hear thou.
 I put it into thy mind
 To come up into this mountain,
 That thou might hear those things
 Which it behoves a disciple to learn from his teacher
 And a man from His God.'

Having thus spoken,
 He showed me a cross of light set up,
 And about the cross a great multitude,
 Not having one form:
 And in it the cross was one form
 And one likeness.
 And the Lord himself I beheld above the cross,
 Not having any shape, but only a voice:
 And not the human voice familiar to us,
 But even more sweet and kind and truly of God,
 Saying unto me:
 'John, it is necessary
 That one should hear these things from me,
 For I have need of one that will hear..'

There follows our Lord's description of the many things for which the symbol of the Cross can stand – both the 'cross of wood' and the 'cross of Light'. It helps us to realise that physical language must often be used symbolically to describe things on the causal level for which there is no modern Western expression.

If, besides, we could cultivate the attitude that the Divine Self has 'need of one that will hear', and so find expression in the world, then our lives and our work here would begin to make sense, instead of being motivated entirely by personal needs.

* * *

