

29 November 1971

## READING 7

In two groups, at any rate, as far apart as Highgate and Cambridge, the reading from the *Hymn of Jesus* had a profound effect on everyone – particularly the sentence, ‘I have need of one that will hear’. And in general, I think, many people feel that the change of attitude suggested by that sentence would do away all at once with numbers of smaller limitations and problems. Meditation or prayer, for instance, would not be based only on personal desire or petition, but would lead to the kind of ‘communion’ which would enable us to hear the Eternal Will and carry it out in wider and wider spheres.

The quotation on the first page of Reading 6 came from a series of talks with the Shankaracharya which stemmed from an idea in the Vedanta which has escaped Western psychology, though it is an expression of a universal Law which the different branches of science are revealing both in the very large and the very small.

Here is a short summary:

All phenomena can be viewed in either of two ways:

1. comprehensively as a whole (samashiti), or
2. analytically as composed of numerous small units or atoms (vyashti).

The word ‘Samashiti’ means ‘aggregate’ – made up of tiny parts that together constitute a collective whole, whereas ‘Vyashti’ refers to the units. Examples: when a number of trees are considered as an aggregate (Samashiti), they are labelled as one, e.g., a copse or wood or forest; or a number of drops of water may be called a pond or lake according to size of aggregation. But when taken as units (Vyashti), they are so many trees or drops or gallons.

(Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophy of India*, p.423)

Incidentally, the same is just as true of time as of magnitude – there are 3,600 seconds in an hour, and 86,400 seconds in a day. Our clocks register aggregates of seconds like minutes and hours; our calendars use aggregates of days like weeks and months in a year; historical surveys use aggregates of years like centuries or millennia; and geology uses millions of years and geological ages and epochs.

(Pause for discussion)

This idea from the Vedanta is however chiefly applied by the Shankaracharya to practical psychology, and comes at a time when psychoanalysis is out and a more comprehensive psychology is emerging. Our interpreter explained it by saying that ‘Vyashti = Jaiswal, and Samashiti = Universal Atman or Param-Atman’. These words were used in the original talk quoted in Reading 6 (1971/31, p.85), and again (Record, 30 January 1970) in answering a question of Mr. Allan’s about feelings of expansion and power he sometimes gets when sitting calmly at his desk. ‘Are they merely imagination?’, he asks.

S. That is not always imagination. There are both these possibilities which can only be judged by results: If one thinks that the achievements that come to one easily and freely

under certain circumstances are done by one single man's cleverness or efficiency, then it must emanate from the Rajasic point of view. If, in performing these activities of solving the problems which arise in time and place, one feels that one has only been the instrument in bringing in the forces at the proper place, then it must be Sattvic and could never be imagining as he puts in his question.

When one has this feeling of being the instrument, one is related to the Samashti. Samashti here is the Universal Being. Through this Universal Being one is always deriving force and also being recharged instantly.

Again illustrated in the physical world:

Just as a battery gets its forces from itself; if a dynamo is attached to it, then the forces are continuously available and being recharged, so the supply of energy is always continuous. In the same way if one is not full of self-pride in doing any official action and is somehow tuned to the Universal Being, then one will keep on getting the forces (energy) and doing the job efficiently all the time.

But if one takes it to oneself, then the supply will be stopped and one can only use as much energy as is available to him, without any extra supply for further uses.

And again, in reply to the questions of someone responsible for a group of 500 in Holland, who was feeling rather overwhelmed by a sense of personal responsibility:

S. Yes, the feeling of ego brings about a limit to the individual. Once you come under your personal limited 'ego', you feel you have limited energy because that's the inevitable outcome. The moment you feel yourself separate and limited, you are cut off from that Universal Being which you really are. So when you are under the control of excess Rajas or Tamas (i.e., when you are under your personal limited 'ego'), you only do the work of Self-realization (or other arduous duties) to the limit of a certain boundary which you have established for yourself.

[You say perhaps, 'Just now, I will do the meditation for only 20 minutes, and that is my limit!' You set some arbitrary limit on yourself because of being under the domination of this limited 'ego', and that is the sign of Rajas or Tamas, rather than of Sattva.]

Since you have lost for the time being the *direct connection with the Universal Being* (which is the Source of all your energy), energy will be very quickly used up, and fatigue will take over, and the flow of the third energy (Sattva) is stopped – rather like the blowing of a fuse. The idea then creeps into the mind that the body has had enough, and sure enough the body actually cannot take anything further.

(Record, 31 January 1970)

[In discussing these answers you can perhaps abandon the Sanskrit words and refer to the separate person in your own name, in contrast to the Universal Self.]

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He then went on to suggest that we could look within our own experience at smaller 'aggregates' of people – like a meeting, a group or a School, which could then cease to be merely a collection of separate atoms and acquire some of the power of Samashti. I strongly recommend that you give some thought to acquiring and retaining such a point of view.

Only last week we had ample opportunity of watching this happen for our group of turners trained by Mr. Resuhi, in the face of great pressure of the impact of divergent interests from without. Instead of the discord and suspicion which appeared likely, the week ended on a note of unexpected friendship and harmony between our turners and musicians and those from Konya. It was delightful, indeed startling, to find that whenever someone was required to play a role in that drama, he or she appeared in exactly the right place at the right time. It was a comprehensive, not an individual operation; but I would like to stress that, whether or not a given individual is needed on a given occasion, the strength of our school depends upon everybody in it who is being faithful and true to its aims.

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