

23 October 1972

## READING 3

If I were to try to convey to you in a few words of my own the Shankaracharya's message, it would be:

'You are doing fine. Just go on using your talents to the best advantage in whatever kind of life you are called on to lead. The individual is not expected to do very much to achieve Realization; it is because all the individuals are part of a big family working together under the direction of a fully Realized man belonging to a great Tradition, that progress is assured.

'The only thing required of the individual is a gradual, but fundamental change of attitude to oneself and one's life. Instead of saying, *'I am doing; I am succeeding, or I am failing,'* (with all the turmoil and frustration that such an attitude sets up) we must learn to say: 'The Param-Atman is doing it all; please keep me at my own job and stop my personal psychology from interfering with Your purposes.' Then you'll have time and energy to use your talents for your own role in the Big Drama.'

Let me illustrate the practical meaning of this, first from your own discussions (reports of which I have read with mounting interest and profit). At the second Monday meeting after we went away (9th October) when doctors D.B.C. and P.F. were skilfully steering the conversation along the line of Reading 1 (Repayment of Debts), they read a remark by St. John White (a teacher of art) at his first meeting with us:

Is this 'paying' to do with returning something that is given you? This 'sense of returning' can be developed especially in creative arts. The compulsion to work is tied in with an unusual feeling of having to give back. In life one is in a situation where one has to give. I have 100 students, which I find difficult – but if one avoided it, that would be some kind of rejection instead of an opportunity.

D.B.C. commented that 'each of us is born into the world with a bagful of talents; and part of our challenge is to find how to utilise our particular talents in order to give something back – to pay our debts.' And a little later P.F. remarked that (when things go wrong inside the School here, and sometimes outside), 'it is frequently a question of *who* is doing it.'

Coming to the quotation in Reading 2 which you have been more recently discussing, D.B.C. put this question to the meeting last Monday from Mrs. Reid at Asgill Lodge:

Have you any understanding of what the Shankaracharya means by 'merging everything into our own Self in our everyday life'?... It seems to refer everything back to the quiet part inside; to the Divine Self?

Finally, in the only report of last Thursday's meetings I have had (the group in the West Studio taken by Mrs. Henry and Alan Bray), the talk revolved round that very same question:

Miss Strong. How to use this energy when the need arises?

Mr. Weigall. What is meant by 'a condition of sameness would possess your heart'?

Dr. Bell. Is another aspect of 'sameness' to be found in the saying, 'Your own Self lives in the hearts of all'?

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Now listen to the same theme developed in India – not (in the following quotation) by His Holiness himself, but by a follower of his who was deputed to talk to us in English:

R.A. *We* are trying to go by the way of the householder.

Swami. You can be doing many different things, but you can offer them to God (Param-Atman). Like the sacrificial pyre which is burnt as an offering to God, you offer each action to Param-Atman... Therefore the worship of God should not be in a closed room only – it should be while you are in action, eating, drinking, speaking, walking. You learn to say, 'It is not *my* acting, drinking, etc., I am only the instrument.' We are like puppets; we recognise that we have to play a role. Think of the money the audience pays to watch the puppet show. Does it go to the puppets? Do they get the profits? No, it goes to the one who controls them... This is called 'worship by work'; you should not sit around and be idle... Further, some puppets have to act saints and some ruffians – they each play a role. This should be our attitude [not sitting in judgement on, or imitating other people].

Your actions and thoughts can be your means of worship. You need not offer flowers, you can offer your actions and thoughts, whether they are good, bad or indifferent. He (Param-Atman) is the fount of all actions, and every action must go back to Him. When linen is put in the fire, every bit is burnt whether it is soiled or clean, whether it was a king's, a queen's, or a crossing-sweeper's. You just have to have one aim and attention on a particular goal. The difficulties come from lack of determination. Just have faith that, according to His Will, *everything is being done*. The fire does not refuse to burn the dirty linen – it burns all. So you just offer up all your actions whether they have been good or bad. You have to sacrifice only your limited consciousness.

R.A. Would you say that we can only get Self-realization through renunciation?

Swami. You have to sacrifice the past to the present, and the future to the present – the Omnipresent Param-Atman. Renunciation and sacrifice are two different things – renunciation means 'giving up' and contains an element of ego. But sacrifice is an act of worship (from a Latin word which means 'making holy').

...

God created East and West, but if He had combined the two – the passiveness of the East and the activity of the West – then everybody would have experienced super-consciousness. (laughs) But in this lies the drama, that He has made *us* inactive and made *you* very active indeed!

R.A. Of course a lot of people work not for fame, etc., but simply to keep alive.

Swami. There are good, bad and indifferent ways of living; some people never aspire, and that is an indifferent way of life. You should always work for perfection; doing good actions is not just passing the time. Good actions must be done to make life perfect so that we will be free of further cares. As long as desire is there, we will not be free, and just an inch below perfection there lurk some desires.

M.A. Do you mean that whatever you are given to do, you should do it to the best of your ability? For the sake of God?

Swami. Yes, with the thought that God has given me this role to play.

J.R. And this is our life – the life we are given *is* our field of work?

Swami. Yes. We should try to play our role very nicely, and with the greatest regard to

God... The sweeper can fill his basket and offer it to God just as well as a basket of flowers. Our role in the drama is prompted from the *same* script and by the *same* director – no work is bad and no work is good so long as the director is the *same*... The soldier's role is to kill. If he says, 'I will not kill because non-violence is the greatest virtue,' he will not be playing his role in the way it should be played – as Lord Krishna reminded Arjuna in the *Gita*.

(Record, 7 October 1972)

Swami. You will find the right action when you surrender to the cosmic Mind and allow yourself to be carried on those shoulders. Then there would be no effort and no waste of energy. With individual ego we keep trying to change the film shown on the cosmic screen; and because we are trying to change the unchangeable, we are miserable.

R. Is it because certain effects are bound to follow certain causes that the film is unchangeable?

Swami. The puppet has to dance – he has no will of his own and cannot be inactive just because he wants to be.

(Record, 12 October 1972)

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## CONCLUSION

If we steadily carry further in this way the idea of His Holiness's quotation from Vyasa in our Programme: 'The gist of all the Scriptures is to keep the Param-Atman in memory all the time'; then the feeling it engenders will not evaporate to the dryness of empty words.

The above conversation brings out what 'Self-Remembering' would really mean. I'd like your comments: would this ideal be as impossible for each of us to achieve as it might appear on the surface?

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