

13 November 1972

## READING 6

The reports so far received of the impact of the Shankaracharya's answers to our recent questions, make entertaining reading. They show the infinite variety of ways which the logical mind, in its critical and suspicious way, can find of *not listening to what is being said*, and then arguing about its own conflicting (but non-existent) notions! All this is predictable, and probably quite inevitable, when a view of life is presented which is completely opposed to the built-in view each person has.

Predictable also because during the last decade and eight visits, the Shankaracharya has been patiently leading us up a rather steep mountain-side which necessitates shedding more and more superfluous baggage, so that we come to the summit attempt quite empty-handed. It is indeed 'easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom', but what is so delightful is when some of you suddenly and *unpredictably* get the point and draw wise and simple conclusions confirmed by your own experience.

What then *is* the point of all these journeys to the East and all the discussions? Looking back in human history at man's perennial game of hide-and-seek with Truth, it's clear that so-called experts are always recommending devastating disciplines impossible of fulfilment in ordinary life. Is it possible, we have been asking, for people like us to realize our possibilities in this day and age which should be free of medieval ignorance? Do we still have to give up our lives to the strenuous Eightfold path of Yoga, or lead a monastic life, or even fulfil the daunting demands made by the Magician of Osokin so many years ago?

The answer being given (by the only man we know who has been a family man himself, and then has travelled the whole distance of the spiritual life) is that this *is* possible in the 1970s, but that it is rather subtle and needs Knowledge, intelligence, and loving persistence in practice. This 'Way of Liberation' consists in making something we can call the 'Soul' (which each has to discover in himself) into a pure white screen on which the moving film of creation is observed and enjoyed without entanglement. If one were to see this moving picture as it really is, one could know what can be done *now* and what cannot be done yet.

To judge from the fight that so many of you are putting up, you desire anything but that! The ploy last week by the sceptical intellectuals was to ask, '*Is it being said* that change is impossible; that one should be pleased when a child is hurt in a road accident; that we had to make an act of faith or go by a way of devotion?' None of that is being said. It is not being said, either, that we should eat locusts and wild honey, wear camel's hair, or give up our career, our family life, our individuality, or even our bodies!

So this week I recommend that we start meetings with five or ten minutes to let the mind and the moving centre sober down, and then listen again to exactly what is being said.

Some of you have asked that we repeat Q.1 (J. R.) and the answer before going on to a re-read of the answer to Q.2 (M. A.):

**Ist Audience: Tuesday 3 October**

After welcoming J. R. at her first visit in person, His Holiness said that:

He wants her to watch and listen to these discourses and get the atmosphere; it is worthwhile to catch some of the spiritual influences which are available here. Although

practically every question has been discussed in our previous talks, it is so very nice to be together and to refresh the memory once again and see each other...

Q.1. J. R. I would like to thank His Holiness for allowing me to come and to ask him how to improve the quality of my attention by better concentration in meditation, as I feel this would be a way to increase my capacity of love for the Param-Atman?

S. Although individuals do feel a separate identity, in reality there is only one identity, and that is the Param-Atman. In our Antahkarana, the inner body, and the subtle body, we have this individual Being, and because of ignorance and other influences it seems to feel a difference from the Param-Atman, and that is why it wants to unite with the Param-Atman. For this unity of the individual and the Universal it seems as if the effort is being made by the individual himself. The individual, if indeed he does anything at all, only removes the impediments which block his vision of the unity of the Param-Atman. In fact, the movement is only from the Param-Atman's side. It is Param-Atman who reaches out to the individual Himself. The love or devotion should be developed by removing the impediments and that, of course, is possible through the meditation and the attention which one brings into one's life; and this, in a way, removes the identity of the individual which is composed of his name, his form and his so-called being. All these things have got to be given up for the real Unity or for the real Love towards the Param-Atman. The effort is, of course, made by the individual, but he makes little effort. The greater effort is made by the Param-Atman, just as a small being or child has small legs, so he can walk only a few steps. The big man can walk quicker and cover more ground. The same applies to the individual who is a very small being, and the Param-Atman which has no limit. This is how the unity of the individual and the Param-Atman should be made.

S. (continues) All individuals are the Absolute themselves, and so are you. It is only a question of realizing that one is the Absolute. To realize that one has to do away with those impediments, and to illustrate this he tells a story about the lion cub:

Once, in the forest, the lioness who had several cubs went off to search for food, and while she was away one of the cubs strayed and got into the middle of a flock of sheep. The cub followed the sheep, and the shepherd, seeing the cub with the sheep, kept him. The cub behaved like the sheep because of the company of the sheep. The shepherd thought that if he remained in this forest, then one day the lioness will roar, and the cub, hearing the roar would remember it was a lion and would attack the sheep. So he took the flock with the cub to another forest where he believed there were no lions.

One day, a lion *did* roar in this other forest, and all the sheep ran away, and the cub also tried to run away. The lion – in lion language! – asked the cub to stop, and said, 'Why are you afraid of me? There is no need – you are not a sheep – you are a lion like me. If you are not sure, I can show you.' So he took him to a pond and the little lion saw in the reflection that he had the same face and same characteristics as the one who roared. Then the lion asked him to roar with him, so he learnt how to roar, and the whole personality and individuality of this little lion was completely changed and he started roaring like a lion.

All our efforts in the world are learning the language of the world, which is like the language of the sheep and the life of sheep. By good company – the company of Saints, and through the discourses, we learn to give up the language of the world and take to the

language of the spirit. Once we have learnt, and have seen how the saintly persons, who are much nearer the Absolute, how they conduct their lives – we can also be like this young lion and start behaving like a proper lion, because we are all proper lions by nature.

(Record, 3 October 1972)

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After discussion to see if you got the message, you could go on to Q.2. (M. A.) and its answer in Reading 5.

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