

26 February 1973

READING 4

PURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND ENERGY

PART 1

You might like this week to use part of a public talk (one of a series given by His Holiness at the recent Mela Festival) since it has relevance to what we were discussing at the Lecture on 14th February. Although this extract is very 'Indian' in flavour, it is most refreshing if taken emotionally in a peaceful atmosphere:

The previous speaker explained the story of Sita, the wife of Rama, as unfolded for us in the Epic *Ramayana*. Just as King Rama represents the fundamental Param-Atman, similarly Sita, his Queen, represents fundamental energy. Energy is the capacity of a body to perform work. A body-less Param-Atman can therefore perform no work and it has to adopt energy for this purpose. But if energy is adopted, there should be some identity to adopt it – otherwise there can be no adoption. If there is to be any energy, there should also be a vehicle to convey it; just as if there are waves there should also be a medium.

The two identities, of the fundamental Param-Atman and the fundamental energy, though going by separate names and allotted different attributes as a matter of convenience, are intrinsically inseparable from each other. Thus Rama and Sita, though different, are yet the same. And all that is attributed to Rama in the story of Rama and Sita is done by Sita, because without energy work cannot be done.

Actually, it is only the display of energy that can introduce us to the possessor of energy – the Param-Atman. Thus energy attracts us towards the presence of Param-Atman. This is what goes in the Upanishads by the name of Brahma-Vidya, the Divine Knowledge.

People possessing knowledge sometimes become too much obsessed with it and begin to feel a pride of superiority, even condemning Bhakti (devotional way). This is misuse of knowledge. Pride, too, has a place in our lives and we may all possess it, but of course using it only to prevent ourselves from stooping low into undignified tendencies. So also has the individual ego (Ahankara)[†] a place in our lives and its use is that of an incentive to duty. For example, the Ahankara of being a policeman should impel a policeman to perform his duties with all the dignity of his rank!

It is the 'Department of the Interior' [autonomic] which sends us towards the path of Bhakti. Bhakti has more use for ideology than for any intellectual reasoning. For one on the path of Bhakti, even if the judgment goes wrong at times over details, then frequently it does not matter...

We make much of our human intellect, the Buddhi. But we forget that it is designed to work within the worldly limits only. Param-Atman is beyond the worldly limits and hence out of the reach of Buddhi. Here a devoted heart reaches the goal. Buddhi can, at the utmost, carry us up to the door and then leave us there to take care of ourselves, having no further approach. As it cannot go further, all it can do then is to keep us *away* from Param-Atman!

[†]Note: The Sanskrit word Ahankara can best be thought of as the whole individuality of a given person – a blend between the 'essence' (inborn), his 'personality' (acquired), and his 'Soul', that inner nature which remains much the same always.

In the context of Bhakti, the example of Kunti (the bereaved mother in the *Mahabharata* epic) furnishes an interesting argument. It is unique in the sense that no one except her has ever asked specifically to be given adversities, whereas everyone else throughout history has asked for deliverance from adversities:

When Krishna was leaving after the war, all others asked for this or that favour. When the turn of Kunti came, she said, 'Give me some adversity or other to remain with me all the time.'

'But why adversity?'

'Because in the past I always thought of You and brought You near me whenever there was adversity, and never when there was none.'

(Record, 29 January 1973)

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PART 2

Some personal questions I sent in the New Year while the Shankaracharya was still very busy have now received answers posted 15th February. The first contains a very great deal in three sentences, which some of you might like to commit to memory, as I have done, in order to get their full flavour:

S. You want to know from all the discourses you have had with me so far, what exactly is the most important for you today?

My difficulty is that unless I can recall all you asked and all I said in the past, I am not in a position to say that. Roughly, however, it may suffice to indicate that the gist of it all should be:

- a) Physically, you devote yourself to universal service, considering yourself everyone's servant.
- b) Devotionally, you give importance to the Supreme Power, keeping in mind its unlimited benevolence.
- c) Intellectually, you identify yourSelf as One with Param-Atman, who witnesses everything and shows Himself in all the forms you see.

My second question had to do with 'renunciation' as in the story in the Programme of the man who went to meet the King to get the keys of the Kingdom. I noticed that when I had a few days of quiet without any teaching, I had much more energy and things all seemed clear and simple. So I asked His Holiness if all this activity might not be due to personal ambition, and whether I should give it all up except for perhaps one or two days a week? His answer was:

S. You say, 'it seems impossible to give it all up just yet, but I could perhaps keep it to about two days a week...'

Now, 'giving up' can be done emotionally and intellectually at all times and in all conditions. In this, there is no question of today or tomorrow, or of one or two days a week. Practise 'giving up' all the time. You just consider the body, the heart, and the mind as belonging to Param-Atman, and so offering all these to the Supreme Power. This is what 'giving up' means.

My third question referred to the Gunas and can be left till later as it needs more explanation.

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[These answers are better not discussed, but kept in remembrance by each individual in his or her own day-to-day life.

This should last two or three weeks!]

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