

8 March 1973

## READING 5

Since 28th January '73 we have been receiving each week several synopses of current talks by the Shankaracharya – some given in public at the January Festival and some continuing now to his people at the Ashram. It's astonishing how closely parallel his thought has been to ours during this time, and I would like you to hear two of the Ashram talks which were a great help to me to read when giving the Lectures:

All living beings seem crying out for something or other. Among mankind some pray for wealth, some for health, some for property, some for fame, some for power, some for freedom from troubles, some for food and basic necessities during life. Moreover, all want what they ask for to be on a permanent basis; nobody wants merely a temporary cure or temporary riches. Also, we want these things in full measure; and nothing which is less than full is good enough, our object being to make ourselves full in all respects.

The Scriptures belonging to every religion devote thought to the question of what among all these things is really worth praying for. If we study those Scriptures accessible to us, it would seem as if all of them want the Param-Atman, because it is *He* only who is completely full in all respects and His fullness can never decrease. All the rest are neither full nor permanent.

Those people really seem to be wanting the Param-Atman though they do not realise this... When one is a child, one wants toys; when one is a boy, one wants education; when one's education is over, one wants employment; when one gets employment; one wants promotion. Thus, from the beginning to the very end, there is never contentment.

The great Mogul Emperor, Akbar, while out hunting, once had to spend the night in the jungle. Unable to sleep owing to the noise made by jackals, he asked why they were crying. Someone said that it was on account of the cold. Akbar ordered blankets to be distributed to the jackals, but still they went on crying. When Akbar again asked the reason, he was told that it was on account of their joy at getting the blankets!

In this way satisfaction never comes to us, and we always go on crying!

The remedy is devoting yourself to Param-Atman. With this, all the unnecessary thinking of worldly needs comes to an end; and thereafter is succeeded by Realization of Param-Atman. Only then is there complete satisfaction; wanting nothing, we feel full. A union takes place between the full self and the full Param-Atman. Those two aspects of fullness mingle inseparably, never to part again.

Though Param-Atman manifests Himself in everything, everything suffers some kind of pollution, yet Param-Atman Himself always remains unpolluted; just as gold remains gold, even after being shaped and reshaped a thousand times into various ornaments. As long as we do not know Param-Atman, our belief in Him remains half-hearted; only when we know Him does our belief become firm and unshakeable.

(Record, 9 February 1973)

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Another talk continues the same theme and shows that only after becoming acquainted could one become devoted:

Normally, it should be the incomplete who would seek the complete. Therefore, one who is already complete should have no necessity to seek the complete. But, strangely, it is only the completed Being that would seek the complete Param-Atman. It is so because it can only be the completed Self which would automatically go into the thought of Param-Atman as soon as it sits down quietly. As long as anything else can attract you be sure that Param-Atman is far away. After all, you cannot ride two horses at the same time.

As Param-Atman is all-powerful and limitless, it is obvious that no bondage could tie Him. But it is strange, again, that strings of love and Bhakti can do so. We know that only acquaintance can create love. Param-Atman is so beautiful that the more we get acquainted with Him, the more we get filled with joy – this creates Bhakti automatically and necessarily. Then, acts of worship became redundant. They, however, constitute a preliminary necessity.

It should be understood here that so-called 'devotion' (which we can attempt before acquaintance) is a forced phenomenon and unreal, while that which sets in inevitably after acquaintance is real. Then our body, mind and all the possessions become dedicated to Param-Atman, and this dedication itself becomes the worship of Param-Atman. Then we eat, drink, act, etc., for the sake of Param-Atman, and do nothing for ourselves. Everywhere, and in everything we see nothing but Param-Atman. This is a stage of absolute intimacy with Param-Atman, and Bhakti is just another word for this stage.

Now let us revert to the question of acquaintance once again. Without being acquainted with a thing, any love or worship offered to it would be insincere. The question, therefore, is how to acquire his acquaintance. Worldly acquaintances can be got by trying. But Param-Atman is outside the worldly sphere. So human trials to catch Him all fail, unless and until he Himself comes within our grip. This He does as soon as he sees that we deserve it. So, what we should do is to deserve it.

Holy company provides us a training ground for all this. One of the things we learn from it is that the deepest possible relationship that can exist between two things is that which exists between our Self and Param-Atman. All other relationships are less. A realisation of this fact can give a lot of Bhakti, and we reach our goal.

(Record, 16 February 1973)

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