

17 June 1974

## READING 8

A description of a possible re-orientation of the mind away from the illusions or Maya of 'past' and 'future' towards the central Source of energy, was intended to lead you to the next question and answer which began our 4th audience on the last visit to the Shankaracharya. In order to cultivate and maintain a state of Attention at any moment, it is necessary to keep 'giving up' if we want to get that Radiant Energy from the Source (Figure 1).

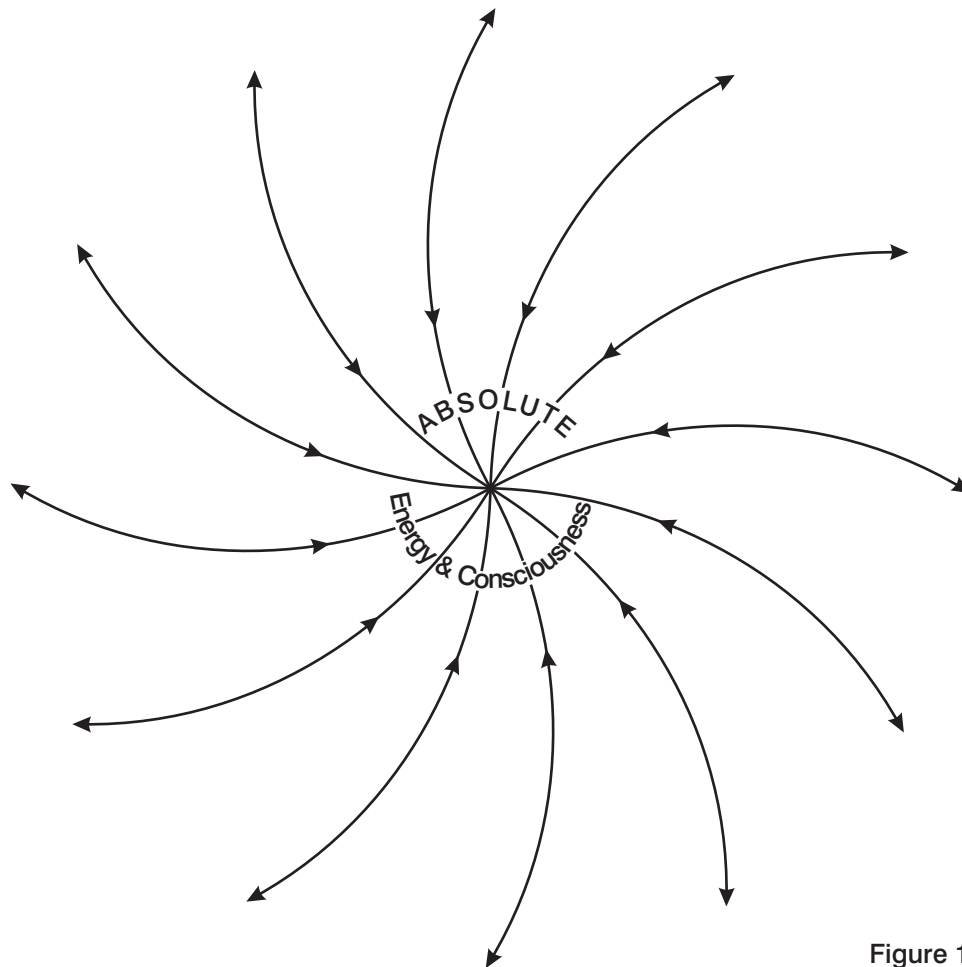


Figure 1

R. (19) To get the peace on the subtle and causal levels it is clearly necessary to *give up*. Suddenly last night I woke up with these words of personal advice from His Holiness ringing in my ears:

*'Giving up* can be done emotionally and intellectually at all times and in all conditions. Practise 'giving up' all the time, by considering the body, the mind and the heart as belonging to Param-Atman and so offering all these back to Him.'

Even a little of this is found to be more effective than anything else. How can I make myself do more of it?

S. This observation is in keeping with the spirit of the first Upanishad – the Ishavasya.

(To refresh your memory, here is a translation of the first three verses:

1. Whatever lives is full of the Lord. Claim nothing, enjoy, do not covet His property.

2. Then hope for a hundred years of life doing your duty in His name. No other way will prevent contamination with the effects of your deeds – proud as you are of your human nature.
  3. A life not illuminated by Self-knowledge, condemns itself.)
- S. continues: The first two verses of this carve out the central core – what can be said to be the ‘essence’ of Indian philosophy. The complete *Gita* which we know, is almost entirely an explanation of these two verses from this Upanishad.

The same thing given in these two verses is also given in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Here Krishna says, ‘Whosoever sees the world in Me, and sees Me in the world, he alone knows Me, and he alone will transcend, and be relieved of the turmoil of this universe. He will be in bliss and he will have everlasting life.’

The essence of the first two verses of Isha Upanishad is that all this Universe is filled with the Absolute. If one takes anything in the world, and looks into its construction, one will ultimately reach the state where one will find the Absolute in everything.

For example: You can take cloth: cloth is made of thread, thread is made of cotton, and the cotton-ball comes from the earth, and the earth is made of water, water comes from fire, fire from air, air from space (‘ether’), and this comes from Mahat-tattva, Mahat-tattva comes from Apra-Prakriti: this in turn comes from Para-Prakriti, and Avyakta, the Unmanifested, is in the Absolute.

(Please don’t stop to debate the meaning of these Sanskrit words; they belong to the ancient interpretation of the Symbol of the Enneagram, and our Western System uses terms which are easier to understand.)

So, if you keep on looking into anything, you will ultimately come to the Absolute, that which prevails in everything. This is the process through which all things come to be manifested. In fact, the Absolute is not just within matter, but it is everywhere. It is not only the ‘efficient cause’, but the ‘material cause’ also. It is the efficient cause *and* the material cause – both are the Absolute; so the Absolute is within and without and the Absolute is everything.

The Isha Upanishad says that the Universe is permeated by the Absolute. Whatever one sees in creation, whatever moves – one should use it fully and enjoy this Absolute everywhere, but one should enjoy it with renunciation. One should not try to hold it or covet it. Just because the Absolute is always everywhere, one need not try to hold it; enjoy it – and give it up. So, ‘giving up’ is the most simple philosophy which promises complete fulfilment of the individual’s life, also Liberation after having enjoyed it. This is the meaning of that first verse.

The next verse says that, if one could live like this by enjoying the Absolute and giving up, one would desire to live a hundred years and, having lived it this way, none of the Karma – none of the actions through which the individual has to go during these hundred years – will bind him at all. They are no bondage for, in fact, he is already liberated; he lives in Liberation; and when the body is finished with he goes forth with Liberation. Indeed, nothing will bind him, so this observation which you have given is the central philosophy. If one could practise it all the day, all the time, one would experience liberation within, and the real Liberation when liberation from the body comes.

We were given the following story some time ago, but the situation demands that it should be told again:

It relates to Prajapati, who is the teacher of the Gods, the priest of the Gods. His son, Kach, having gone through the proper education in the Vedic and Upanishadic texts, and having acquired all the knowledge that was to be acquired, came back to his father. His father asked him what he was intending to do. He said, 'The essence of all I have learnt is that renunciation is the best medium for life, so I would like to go the way of renunciation.' So he would not take up the activities of the priesthood, and he would not help in the household activities either; he just stayed in the house.

After some time, the father asked him whether he had really renounced everything? As far as the father could see, his son had renounced all work, but he still keeps on moving, eating, and using the amenities of the house. 'So what about that?' The son said, 'All right, I will renounce the house,' so he left the house and went into the jungle and stayed there.

Then, after another interval, the father visited him there and asked him what the situation was? The boy said, 'I can't say I have acquired complete peace, so it seems I have not yet renounced everything.' The father said, 'Yes, of course, it seems so – your renunciation is not complete, otherwise peace would descend on you.' So he renounced the cloth he wore, the food he ate, and all activity, yet he could not get the real peace of mind.

'Now,' he said, 'the only thing left to renounce is my body, so I must renounce the body,' and he prepared a funeral pyre intending to jump into it. His father suddenly appeared and asked him to be sure that this would be the final renunciation. The son asked, 'But once I have given up the body, what else will remain to bind me to worldly things?'

The father replied: 'Your subtle body is not going to die with your physical body, and the activities of the subtle body (which has desires) will make it keep on wandering, and it will not subside after the body is burnt. You will get another body when you are dead because there will be some desire in your subtle body, so burning the body is not the final answer – you are not going to get rid of this creation.'

So the son said: 'Well, what should I do if I cannot renounce, what else should I do?'

The father then said: '*At last you have asked me a question*, so now it is possible for you to learn something! Give up all your learning, and the final giving up – the final renunciation – will be the giving up of the very idea of renunciation. *You* are not giving up anything, everything *is* given up. By the idea of renunciation you are holding something in preference to other things – in fact, you are not renouncing; you are holding on very tightly to something lesser.'

S. cont: The creation is such that everything is there by itself – everything has a purpose and must fulfil its function; so it must keep on rotating, it must be used. Use everything, and give up the idea that you are renouncing. Don't hold on to anything in this creation, and that can only be done by this *final renunciation of giving up the idea that you have anything*. In fact, you have nothing. Everything is of the Absolute, everything is permeated by the Absolute; you use whatever you need, and the rest simply belongs to Him. This we must keep in our minds when we think of renunciation.

(Record, 19 January 1974)

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