

1 July 74

READING 10

The next questions and answers continue the subject of the individual which the Shankaracharya, in order to achieve Unity, maintains should be taken as one single *whole* including everything:

R.A. (24) Is it right to feel that nothing belongs to me, even the Ahankar that is called Allan; that Ahankar is really only the instrument for the use of the Absolute?

S. The machine is certainly the individual, but there is some other element which runs the machine – which supplies the force to run the machine. This force is coming only through the Real Self, the Atman, who is called Allan.

The body, the senses, and the inner instruments, they are also part of the name which we call Allan. As long as the force which governs this machine is kept without any hindrance – as long as one does not claim it to be done by one's own mind or body; if one recognises that all commands are coming from the Self within, and then are interpreted without any boundaries – without any further limitation – then one will see that the Atman is acting through the individual.

One cannot separate the two, because it is in the design that the Atman will *have* to work through the Ahankar. But no boundaries should be created, and none of what is called 'Allan' can be removed from the real Allan.

To a further question of Lady Allan's (25), he went on to explain what he means by the expression 'inner instruments' in his last answer:

S. Ahankar is *one* of the parts belonging to the Antahkarana. Antahkarana is the internal machinery – internal body – and it contains these four parts – Ahankar, Chitta, Buddhi and Manas – which are just like four chief mechanisms in a car, each of which has a different function in relation to the whole car.

Of these four types of function, Ahankar gives the feeling of 'I'; in Chitta you have all the store of knowledge and the memories; Buddhi makes the decisions and discriminates; and Manas collects all the impressions which come to the individual – this and that without selection (and transforms them into sensations, desires and thoughts).

(Record, 19 January 1974)

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At the next audience on the Sunday morning, the first question was:

R. (28) In a talk here this time last year we are told that His Holiness said: 'One of the benefits of Holy company is that we learn from it that the deepest possible relationship that can exist between two things is that which exists between Ahankar and Param-Atman.' So no wonder we could not define it in words! Would only experience in the presence of a Realized Man reveal it?

S. In the realm of Bhakti – devotion – this relationship exists very closely between the Param-Atman and the Ahankar, and is used in the most positive manner. The individual in this realm looks at the Param-Atman in its manifest form and makes it the object of his worship. He sings the praise of this Lord (whom he wishes to worship) by proclaiming all the glories which are enshrined in this Divine Self and, because he tries

to become One with Him through his emotion, he subdues or merges his Ahankar into the Being of the Absolute – the God. Then it seems that, because of this Unity, the qualities and the glories of the God come to be shared by the devotee himself.

Take the poet Tulsi Das who, in one of his couplets, says that whenever you try to unite with any particular being (it could be a God or anything else), and you devote yourself entirely to the service of that particular being, then all the peculiarities of that particular being will be shared by you.

When a devotee merges his Ahankar into God, then he starts sharing the qualities of God.

When you, for instance, take to the ideal of being a Man, then immediately all the qualities associated with Manhood are separated from those of all other beings, and you feel shy and ashamed of not being able to measure up to those qualities associated with being a Man, so you refrain from being like an animal. One always keeps that standard before oneself, because this manifestation of the Absolute as a Man – ‘The Ideal Man’ – stays very close to the Ahankar of the individual, and then he behaves as a Man should.

This is how one can see that through the Ahankar, when it is Sattvic, then the qualities of the Gods descend on the man. When it is Rajasic, then he takes it as his own body – his own doing, and does not get the finer qualities of the Absolute. When he takes over the Tamasic aspects of his Ahankar, then he acts in a very cruel and rigid way and, in fact, he becomes less than a Man should be. If the Ahankar is Sattvic, then the relationship with the Gods will also be Sattvic.

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This intimate relation between the feeling of ‘I’ and the Supreme Atman which is so hard to define in ordinary words, was then described in two other ways by the Shankaracharya when answering R.’s next question (29):

S. When the original Shankara was discoursing with his disciples, he told them that in one couplet of verse he would give them the gist of all the Advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy, and in that couplet it is said that:

Brahma satyam, Jagan mithya; Brahma jivaiva naporah.

[Brahman is Truth, world is illusion; Self and Brahman are not different.]

He then showed a position of the hand which has been described to some of you already as the ‘hand-sign of Liberation’:

Three fingers, the middle, ring and little finger, depict the three aspects of waking, dreaming and deep sleep governed by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. All these three aspects of creation, in which the Universal and the individual Nature (Prakriti) are involved, are only illusion, so are separate from the index finger which acts as the Jiva – the person – the thumb being the Absolute. The state of Unity is shown by separating the index finger from the other three and linking it to the thumb; the Jiva, though actually One with the Atman but separated from the ever-changing Nature, now remains with the Absolute and is just the same.

So the individual himself is the Brahman, and all this manifold Nature governed by the Law of Three Forces is illusion and, therefore, outside the realm of the Absolute which remains separate, not involved. This is the Knowledge symbol.

(Record, 20 January 1974)

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[Several people have already found it of value to commit either the Sanskrit or the English translation of the above couplet to memory, keeping it steadfastly in the mind; and some have also used the hand-sign either during Meditation or in private at other times.]

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The conversation then developed into a description of the 'deep dive' and the states of Samadhi and Turiya, which has been quoted more than once at Meditation meetings, so will not be repeated here.

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