

21 October 1974

READING 2

PART 1. From the Small Monday Meeting (14th October 1974)

Dr. R. We will read some of the questions at two of your meetings last week, because they are so practical and lead directly into the Shankaracharya's recent words (Part 2):

- 1) Mrs. Scrutton. Does 'giving up' mean losing all identification?
- 2) Mr. de Lotbinière. How can we change this idea of 'giving up' from an intellectual concept into a practical thing? (He thought it related very much to a matter of 'state').

Dr. R. 'Losing all identification' is the *end-result* of 'giving up'. Keep giving up the 'personal' accompaniment to our thoughts, feelings and actions by substituting a big ideal or impersonal idea like Christ or Param-Atman, and more and more of the usual objects of our identification will lose their power over us.

- 3) Mrs. Peter Eadie. I feel confused between 'giving up' and 'offering up'?

Dr. R. No need for confusion – take them as the *same* thing. All our impulses, thoughts, feelings, actions ultimately come from the Source – the Divine Self; so we offer them back to the Universal again. We only give up the illusion that *we* are the agent, and acknowledge the True agent – the Cause of it all.

- 4) Mrs. Little. I feel that 'giving up' is like removing the skin of an onion, layer upon layer?

Dr. R. But remember you have a great advantage over Peer Gynt! When he did the same thing, he found *nothing* at the centre of the onion. But now when we skin our onion by 'giving up', we find at its centre a wonderful Force and a wonderful Consciousness. No need to go back to old man Ibsen!

- 5) Mrs. Haines. I was going one day to see an old lady and resolve a conflict, praying inwardly for help, when I had a tremendous feeling of the power of the Absolute. I suddenly became aware of the beauty of my surroundings and everything seemed to be related. At the end of the day I did not feel that I had helped the old lady, and later heard that her conflict had been resolved.

Dr. R. A nice example, sudden and unexpected as usual, but with equally unexpected good results later on. 'Good receivers and good transmitters' – that is all we need to be; for we never know when those rewarding results will come.

- 6) Mr. Haines. (in relation to Figure 1 of Reading 1): This diagram gives hope. One meets 'NOW' in the daily round. Is 'keeping the Param-Atman in mind' the same as living in the present moment – the NOW?

Dr. R. I think you will find that one depends on the other – if your mind wanders into the past or the future, you forget all about the Param-Atman. Progress lies in acquiring the power to *attend* to what lies before you at any moment, and do what is needed with all your heart as an offering to your Creator.

- 7) Mrs. Little. Much easier to 'give up' than think about it as an idea.

Dr. R. Yes; actually to *do* it is quite simple and easy; thinking about it makes it seem distant and impossible.

8) Mr. Newble (room – as repeated). Do you think that the singular qualities of the word ‘Param-Atman’ help to break the thought circuits which are a continuous process going on all the time? We need an idea to help us to come back; and is the word ‘Param-Atman’ quick and brief enough to bring us back, to come to?

Dr. R. You gather together in your heart and mind more and more of the meaning contained in the *concept* Param-Atman, and then you don’t have to *pronounce* that long foreign word in the heat of action. You can make the idea contained in that word the most powerful idea in the world – ‘Learn to go through life as if facing a noble guest’. To the true Christian the symbol of the Cross has great power, even if he does not make the sign of the cross externally.

9) Miss Blum. If one gives up and lives in the present, there is only happiness and joy.

Dr. R. Yes indeed. ‘Happiness, Love, True Knowledge are natural properties of the Self and surface spontaneously when the Soul concentrates’. When the human mind is working well (with energy and attention), it comes up with exactly what we need, at the moment we want it. It is a wonderful equipment we all have.

10) Mrs. Koren (room – as repeated). Sometimes when one tries to ‘give up’ it is because one is ‘hooked’ on to something. It is really an intellectual exercise and doesn’t go deep enough to remove that ‘I-ishness’. Could you advise us how to go further?

Dr. R. It has to start as an intellectual exercise, but it acquires power as it becomes more emotional from seeing how magical its effects can be. Advice is to do it when it seems most difficult – not just when it seems easy.

11) Mrs. Koren. If you are patting yourself on the back, what do you do to give up?

Dr. R. Drop it! (She shrugs helplessly and husband smiles!) Drop all personal psychology – not only being pleased but, most of all, being *displeased* with yourself. Turn your little ‘I’ towards the Director of the Play!

12) Mr. Eadie. Could we be told more about the objective of the organisation?

13) Miss Mary Skeaping. We could become very parochial if we don’t understand what the aim of the organisation is – in Mr. Ouspensky’s day he warned about this.

Dr. R. The aim of our organisation has always been to find the True Self – Mr. Ouspensky called it Real ‘I’ or the ‘Magician’ in his play *Osokin*.

But this aim may wear different clothes – different colours from time to time.

What is the aim of our organisation now in 1974?

The answer for me is contained in the first sentences of the Shankaracharya’s most recent talk at his Ashram (28 September 1974), which he tells us was based on the questions we have been asking him:

S. Param-Atman (Universal Self) is the only Reality and the only Truth. The Atman (individual Self) has an invariable connection with Him.

But though everybody knows this, it is surprising that they find no charm in it. This is due to the gulf of ignorance that lies before us. The question is how to bridge this gulf.

R. This is surely how we could best express today (in 1974), the real aim of our Society. It must help all its members to experience this charm and transmit it everywhere by bridging the gulf of ignorance. Two thousand years ago, it was expressed thus:

Pater noster qui es in caelis, Sanctificetur nomen tuum;
Adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua.
Sicut in caelo et in terra.

‘May Thy name be made Holy’. Same aim, different language and example.

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PART 2. Continuation of Ashram talk

S. ‘The whole of mankind has a desire for the good; no one wants the bad. This is so obvious that it needs no proof. But in spite of the desire for good, our efforts are directed towards the bad. Thus, while sowing the seed for evil, we want the fruit to be good. In other words, the means to happiness is disliked, and the means to unhappiness is liked. We knowingly fall into a ditch and then cry for help. We go on piling up troubles, and a stage comes when we are unable to bear them any more. Then we pray for death, thinking that death would take them away. Sleep also ends our troubles for the time being, but we get them again when we wake up. Same is the case with death.

We do not see any thorns in the seeds of a thorny tree. But if we sow those seeds, we shall get the thorns all right. If we do not want the thorns, then let us not sow their seed. Similarly, the seed of trouble is harmless to look at; but we should know that it would produce trouble and, therefore, we should not sow it.

We really should transform our nature. But we cannot do so solely by our own efforts. Our efforts and the Grace of Param-Atman should both be there in order to be successful. Coriander (Haldi) powder is yellow and lime powder is white. But mixed up together, a paste with the lovely red colour of Safranin is produced. Similarly, our efforts plus Param-Atman’s Grace when joined together work for our uplift.

A poor old woman used to earn her living by cutting wood in a jungle all day and selling it in the village market in the evening. But she was spending all her earnings the same day. One day she decided to cut more wood in order to save some money for a rainy day. But the bundle became so heavy that she could not lift it and night fell. In her sheer exasperation she cried out, ‘Oh Death, better take me away!’

Death appeared and said that it had come to take her away as she wanted. ‘Not that,’ she said, ‘I had only called you to help me carry my burden.’

So we sometimes wish for death when in trouble, but we fear it when it really comes. This is not so with those who give up attachment to the body beforehand:

A Mahatma was in the habit of tying up his little belongings into a bundle and putting it away every morning. Someone remarked that it was very foolish for him to waste that much time day after day as if he were going for a journey.

He replied that it reminded him to be always ready for his final journey, and thus giving up love for the physical body. This identification with the physical body is the root cause of all the evils in the world.

Even better than the actual act of praying, is holding the thought of Param-Atman in

mind. We can only pray for a short time, but we can keep this thought in the mind *all* the time. Param-Atman is very generous. A little thought of Him melts His heart.[†]

If our Manas becomes stronger, then our Buddhi becomes correspondingly weaker; but if Buddhi becomes stronger, the pull of Manas gets weaker. As Buddhi must come to rule the Manas, it should be stronger. Even a little attachment to the world can push us into darkness. But what is darkness for everybody else, is Light for the Realized man.

We wash our body day after day with soap to make it clean, but it goes on becoming dirty all the time. There is no end to this kind of dirt. The same is the case with the mind. Surrender to Param-Atman removes the dirt of the mind.

[Dr. R. No one would claim that today's bath is 'the final bath to end all baths!' So day after day we keep washing the body and the mind as well.]

Just as a son has some elements of his father [we call them 'genes'], similarly all of us carry some element of Param-Atman.

For example: We all know that wood is inflammable. This knowledge by itself would not create a flame. When we rub two pieces of wood vigorously together, a flame appears from the wood itself without application of any external fire.

Similarly, the flame of Knowledge springs up from the rubbing together of our thoughts, and it burns away all that is undesirable.

To know is merely knowledge, but to *acknowledge* is to love. Yet even to know and to acknowledge is not enough; we should also *think*.

Constant holding in the mind the thought of the Guru-disciple relationship is enough. Till when? Till there is eternal life in the body. Devoting the mind to Param-Atman and forming mental images of Param-Atman should be a constant practice. Then life would flow naturally and doubts would dissolve by themselves.

(Record, 28 September 1974)

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Questions arising from this talk, to be thought about, & discussed next week:

1. Do we really believe that 'the whole of mankind has a desire for good, and that this is so obvious that it requires no proof'? What does he mean?
2. How does each one of us keep sowing the seeds of a thorny tree, knowing that we are doing so? Examples please.
3. The simile of coriander and of lime powder is a beautiful example of the Law of Three. Can we find its psychological and Spiritual counterparts?
4. Have we formed our own evidence for the statement that 'a little thought of Param-Atman melts His heart'?
5. What is meant by 'The flame of Knowledge springs up from the rubbing together of our thoughts'? Do you remember that our Western System said the same thing in different words?

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[†]Note: Our Western System says: 'Prepare to die tomorrow, but look after your body as if it had to live 100 years.'