

28 November 1977

READING 5

WEDDING GARMENT

At one point in our recent meetings with the Shankaracharya I put a joint question on behalf of my wife and myself (sixth audience) as follows:

Question. F.C.R. and J.R.

Death is often described in sacred writings like the Christian Gospel as a wedding or Union with the Lord as Bridegroom, and we never know when He will come. In one story a man was thrown out from the wedding feast into outer darkness because he had not put on a wedding garment.

What is this wedding garment? Is it bliss and doing honour to the Lord?

S. It is true that at the time of death certain people *do* have a wedding with the Lord – Union with the Lord – but it cannot be said that *everyone* will have the Union. It all depends on how they have lived in this world into which they have been put. To what have they wedded their heart? Because this will decide what is going to happen in the next world.

As an illustration, in India where marriages are arranged often in childhood, the girls never know what their next home is going to be like. When the time comes for them to depart from their own home which they have known so well, to go to the house which they do not know, they often feel sorry and apprehensive and this apprehension expresses itself in tears, and they cry because loving relationships are being broken and the new ones have yet to be established.

Those fortunate people who have established a relation of love and have gone courting with the Lord in some way – either through the Scriptures or through discipline, or any other way – if they have had this courtship experience of love, they develop the wedding garment before they die.

When they die, this garment helps them to have Union with the Lord. So one has to prepare oneself in this present life, and this preparation consists in the introduction to the Lord – to knowing Him, and trying to experience Him in any of the three Traditional Ways or the Fourth Way to which we belong.

Having established this relationship of love, then one is sure to experience the wedding in the next world.

After a pause he continued:

What mostly happens is that the majority of individuals bind themselves to worldly things – either to other people, or to their house and possessions, or to money, or to social position and prestige; and at the time of death these entanglements of theirs become predominant for them, and because of this dwelling on the memory of such things at the time of death, they are thrown back into the same situation with which they have previously died. (see Mr. Ouspensky's 'Eternal Recurrence') So they do not come close enough to the Absolute for the wedding or for anything else.

Unless they learn, and try to establish that relationship in this life, they will not have the wedding garment ready, and the wedding will not be performed.

Jaiswal then read the end of the last question, which he had not yet put:

R. If my own death is not far off, I want to be sure that the thought of Param-Atman and the dedication of one's actions means that the wedding garment is being prepared.

S. You have already been betrothed, and you need not think about such things at all. In fact, you have been initiated, and you have been visiting this future wedding place every day during your Meditation. Your Union is already established. When death (which has to come to all of us) comes, all one has to keep in mind is that this *body* is being discarded. *Apart from discarding this physical body, nothing else is being changed at all.* And since you *have* established your relationship over all these past years, I think you will find that whatever situation arises there, in the new world, it will not be strange to you at all; you will find it very familiar. You will be going to a place which is a familiar place and not new to you; and you will not feel any hesitation or fear when you enter that land.

The only advice to be given at this moment is to shed all feelings of fear about going into the unknown, or loss of body which is not a real loss in any way. You have performed (in the best way) the deeds which this body was capable of performing, and there it ends.

The future journey is going to be all right for you.

(Record, 31 October 1977)

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COMMENT

We are sure that this description applies, not just to one person, but to all who have genuinely done their best under the guidance they have had – whether or not they seem to have prospered in their Meditation or in other ways. For His Holiness has promised that everybody in this School will all receive Liberation together with him. We are all in a train together; and what is important, as he has said, is to remember your destination when you buy your ticket; keep your connections, and get off at the right station!

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