

20 February 1978

## READING 5

We will have to continue for one more week with the material already issued but here are quotations from the Shankaracharya which may enlighten and enliven further discussion:

R.A. Gave an observation about one of his war experiences when time practically stood still and asked if this was connected with subtle body?

S. Physical world has its own speed and the subtle body operates at much higher speed. When a situation develops with which the physical body cannot cope, one does sometimes find that the subtle body takes over. Whenever this happens, its speed of working makes the actions in the coarse world seem to slow down or even to stop. This is because of the different space and time scales of the subtle world. People like to describe these occasions as miraculous, but in fact the forces of the subtle body are always available although they are not used except in emergencies.

After the meeting in which R.A. recounted his wartime experiences of change in time and with His Holiness's answer, a man who was frequently at the meetings came up to him. He explained that he was a 'weather man', and that he often had to make calculations on temperature and conditions at different altitudes, especially for air navigation. On one occasion there was an emergency and he was asked for the details at a certain altitude in a great hurry. He found he gave an immediate answer without calculation, but on checking, it proved to be quite accurate, and he now realised this was what His Holiness described as the operation of the subtle world.

(The man mentioned is Mr. R. L. Dixit, whose friendship and help since that day in 1968 have been of immense value to us all but who is, alas, now very ill.)

R. Realized man also always seems to have plenty of time to take in the person who asks the question and others in the room as well, and yet answers instantaneously. Nothing seems to come between him and Atman.

S. To be Realized means to be experienced. A Realized man has experienced all stages and states of human life. All experiences, all knowledge is accumulated in subtle world and the inner circle is always connected to this subtle body of Knowledge. Secondly, the same questions have all been asked before because human beings are always the same. The answers have also been the same because the remedies are always the same. An experienced barrister when asked questions answers from his head because he knows the answers from his own knowledge and experience, whereas an inexperienced barrister will consult his books. A Realized man answers quickly because he doesn't have to think about the answer. He lives in the present which contains all questions and all answers.

(Record, 19 September 1968)

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S. Time factor is part of material world. Where there is space there is time. For instance, a long journey takes much time, a short journey less, but in the spiritual world time and space have no validity. One can't think of time in relation to Self-realization. The Atman which is to be realized is here, there and everywhere. No one has to journey to find it. It is found only in oneself. One factor which may have a bearing on time is

the intensity of desire and the process of cleansing and purification going through the disciple. Two disciples of the same calibre, going by the same system and formula may not achieve Self-realization at the same time, or neither may achieve it at all. This is a matter for the Inner World, but as the process of purification and cleansing shows itself, Self-realization seems to be nearer.

R. The last few days I have found great help in practice from your words 'Buddhi must be stilled'. This is achieved now during meditation and is so also when I wake at night. But any mental activity sets it moving again, and it takes time once more to still it. How to keep it quieter?

S. We want to still Buddhi because Buddhi is in motion. Of course it is in motion because every activity is basically Rajas. Whenever you have activity Buddhi will have to work and so move. When in meditation Buddhi is still, that is fine. Nothing wrong. What one needs is to see (to become Observer) that one has to activate Buddhi for certain work but when not required one stills it. You can enjoy Buddhi either still in meditation or properly active in work. Meditation has three qualities, its use can be described in three ways. First nourishment, second cleansing, third healing. We need food every six hours to keep the body going, a bath every 24 hours to keep it clean, medicine every so often if ill – if homoeopathic every seven days! As body needs these things, so whole system needs this service, except Atman which in fact does not need anything, being complete in itself. But activities of Rajas and Tamas collect impurities. Meditation cleans them out. If no impurities, no need for meditation. Meditation is not an end in itself. Bliss is the ultimate end. It is the nature of the Atman to be blissful, but Rajas and Tamas deprive it of bliss. Meditation cleans out everything so that Atman reaches its natural state of bliss.

R. I feel sorry that I get pulled away from Atman. I would like to do things more from my centre.

S. If you feel you are removed from the centre, that is the most important thing. This is the strength of Sattva. To be active in the world is no bad thing, for this is your destiny. For example, if someone works hard in the heat of the sun he is doubly appreciative of the shade of the tree. If you are very busy in your ordinary life, go on doing it, but the moment you come back to meditation, the pleasure and peace will be specially deep. All who want to give this peace to others have a special responsibility. They must not withdraw from the active world. If they did, people would think that they are trying to escape from the active world. That is not what the meditation is for. Go into activity, exert yourself, exhaust yourself if need be, but keep alive the thread leading to Sattva which calls on you to come back home to meditate and get the energy for next time.

(Record, 18 October 1965)

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S. The attention employed by the arrow-maker would differ from stage to stage in completion of his work. The arrow was made in different stages. First the rough form was created and gradually the shape was refined until it came to the most delicate stage to shape and sharpen the point. According to the coarseness or fineness of the work involved, one would see that the fullness of attention also changes. If the work is coarse one doesn't need to use the finest energy by giving pointed attention because coarse energy would be good enough to accomplish the job. As the work progresses and comes to finer stages, it would demand more and more attention and when it comes to the last

stage or the finest work, only then would one need to use one's finest energy available and put in greatest attention.

When one reaches the stage of full attention as experienced by the arrow-maker, one would see that the outer world is practically cut off and a love of Self takes over, and this keeps one busy with full attention on the work in hand. All this is known as Dharana. This means 'to hold on', which is described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras in the words: 'to hold on one's attention at a point is known as Dharana.' This does not actually relate to meditation; meditation is something different.

(Record, 19 September 1968)

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S. The last barrier to the Atman is Ahankar, the feeling of 'I' – I, the one who is meditating, or I am the one who is about to go over the barrier into the unity. As long as one sticks to this the unity is impossible. We have to learn this and make sure in oneself that when one reaches to a spot of this nature, one should drop even the idea of the feeling of 'I'. Everything is to be given up, even the sense of I. Once the sense or feeling of I is given up, then only is unity possible.

A certain man went to a Holy man to be initiated in meditation. He was asked as to what things he saw on the way. He said that among all those things I saw I remember a donkey very well. He was then asked to remove him from his memory. The poor man tried hard, but failed, and expressed his inability to do so. The Holy man said that the art is to drop the memory. This memory or the feeling of 'I' is the greatest and the last barrier to meditation. The man who meditates or the man who observes must be dropped so that he is able to merge into one.

When one knows that one is still one is not still, and when one knows one is at peace, one is still away from it, because the great barrier is still there to recognise 'I' and its relation with peace and stillness. In complete peace or stillness there is no 'I'.

(Record, 4 November 1967)

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