

27 February 1978

READING 6

Our weekly meetings help us to find the three things which the Shankaracharya says are necessary for progress along the path of development. These are 'The Grace of the Teacher, the company of 'those beings who have decided to go on the way of Self-realisation and liberation' and the help 'gained from the Scriptures and all those books which throw light on these subjects'.

Let us examine these one by one.

First: The Grace of the Teacher

A teacher gathers those on the level of common man and takes them towards the Absolute and also brings down some of the Glory of the Absolute so that he can install this glory in society and raise the level of mankind.

(Record, 22 January 1970)

Connection with the Teacher is very necessary for both awake and sleeping man, but it is not bound by space at all. It can come from a distance or from close but in the spiritual world distance counts for very little.

(Record, 10 August 1964)

Again:

Contact in flesh and blood is not important. Mental contact *is* important. My blessing *and I* will always be with you.

(*ibid*)

A. Is one guided towards a Teacher or is it luck?

S. The establishment of relation between Teacher and disciple is not directed by luck or fate, but is a process of cause and effect. Actions bear some fruit, and with that one gets also luck or fate. These are always subject to time, action and place. By luck one gets something which must vanish within a certain limit of time or place. These laws do not apply to the relation with a Teacher, which is two-fold. It is based on the Grace of the Teacher and the receptive faith of the disciple which bring about this situation; and once the relation is established it stays till liberation of both, or unity. When the rains come the pots which have their mouths towards the sky get filled with water, and if they face the earth they would not get even a drop of water. In the same way the Grace is raining from the Absolute, True Knowledge and the Teacher. From Absolute the rain of Grace is eternal and also from the Knowledge, but a Teacher appears in a certain age and all those who keep alive with faith get that Grace of the Teacher.

A. Can we assure our friends in London that they are also connected with this relationship?

S. *Yes, they can be assured.*

(Record, 3 November 1967)

Second: The Scriptures

All religious books the Bible, the Koran or the Hindu Scriptures all speak the same truth. The Vedas say, 'Truth is one but the wise express it in many ways'. For us as far as Truth is concerned there is no difficulty, no disparity, no difference anywhere. Only the 'rare and special people who are wise speak in their own language the same Truth. Those who do not understand the Truth and yet try to interpret, put it wrongly'.

Third: Good Company

S. The good company is also of three kinds. There are some people who have little Sattva within and they naturally respond enough at least to appreciate the good words they hear. Due to lack of enough Sattva they fall short and neither raise questions nor practise the Teaching. This is the coarsest part of the good company. The second kind raises questions because they think about keeping the Teaching pure and making it more practical, and also make efforts to practise the Teaching.

The third kind of good company inherits in full and brings True Knowledge into full practice (of creative thinking).

There was a certain man who deposited his treasure of four drums full of gold coins underground in a spot where the highest point of the temple's shadow fell on a particular time and day of the year. He wrote a note in his Will that on such and such a date and time he has deposited his treasure under the zenith of the temple. After his death, the sons tried to acquire the wealth. They even dismantled the top of the temple but all was in vain. They also consulted others but for a long time nothing came out. One day a Holy man came to their house, to whom they told their worry. He asked to look at the note and then advised them to call him a day before the date mentioned in the note, meanwhile to restore the temple in full and exactly as it was. On the appointed day and time he took them to the spot where the shadow fell and told them to dig and unearth the treasure.

All this shows that there are three kinds of good company. First is the physical which only hears and appreciates, the other is knowledge which analyses and tries to practise and the third is the truth or company of the Self which knows and practises and can show the way, for they hold the keys to all problems. This is mostly received directly through the Tradition.

(Record, 14 September 1968)

When we meet we can be sure that if we are living and humble the Grace of our Teacher is with us. In his presence, if we are attentive, we can hear the reading of True Knowledge and we can help each other by our questions if they are real and by our observations if they relate to our search for truth. There may be no striking or obvious results but if we do our part and if we persevere, we can rest assured and happy, as did the disciple who danced under the Tamarind tree, that in the end, sooner perhaps than we sometimes think, we shall reach our goal.

It might be useful to consider in the light of these three graces first one, and later other, ideas of the Teaching which we have been studying.

Our material this term has covered the different states of consciousness related to attention and the observer. So shall we take as our first idea the teaching of Ouspensky that Man is asleep. Pushing aside all that is false let us be drawn into the presence of our teacher and listen to what the scriptures have to say on the subject and hear the views and experiences of our Companions on the Way.

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The Scriptures

(a) The Christian Tradition

Romans 13: 11

Besides, you know 'the time' has come: you must wake up now; our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted...

Ephesians 5: 12

Anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.

Mark 13: 33

Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, 'Stay awake'.

Luke 22: 45 (The Mount of Olives)

When he rose from prayer he went to the disciples and found them sleeping *for sheer grief*. 'Why are you asleep?' he said.

Thessalonians 1: 5

You are all sons of the day; we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober.

Mark 14: 38 (Gethsemane)

Had you not the strength to keep awake one hour?

The Hymn of the Robe of Glory (early Christian)

I forgot that I was a King's son
and became a slave to their king.
I forgot all concerning the Pearl
For which my Parents had sent me;
And from the weight of their victuals
I sank down into a deep sleep.

The Spirit of Prayer (William Law 1686–1782)

Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ, who from all eternity has been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this pearl of eternity that lies hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is *all*; and given when thou hast found it thou wilt know that all which thou hast sold or given away for it is as mere a nothing as a bubble upon the water.

(b) The Shankaracharya Tradition

S. In our System, if man is sleeping he won't know anything. A man of Consciousness, if he is awake, has the ability to catch those particles of knowledge and keep them. A

man in sleep might have it by being in association. He will get it but he will lose it very soon. So it is a question of being awake or being asleep that will decide. Further to that, if a man is awake – if he is conscious – it is not necessary that he come very close to the Realized Man; he has the power to receive it – the Knowledge – from a distance as well.
(Record, 10 August 1964)

S. Once you are awakened there is no question of going back to sleep. Once awake you are awake for ever. Although in the common world we see everyone in sleep, in ignorance. But if one is awakened by one of the Ways – of Knowledge, of Devotion, or Yoga, or Action – there is no question of going back. Even if you are sleeping, that realization of the Atman will never leave you.

(Record, 11 August 1964)

(c) The Sufi Tradition

Mathnawi of Rumi. Book 4. (p.472)

Though he fell asleep and became oblivious of the past, how should they leave him in that self-forgetfulness?

From that sleep they will bring him back again to wakefulness, that he may mock at his present state,

Saying, ‘What was that sorrow I was suffering in my sleep? How did I forget the states of truth (the real experiences)?

How did I not know that that sorrow and disease is the effect of sleep and is illusion and phantasy?’

Even so this world, which is the sleeper’s dream; the sleeper fancies that it is really enduring...

The symbolism of the Mukabeleh is described as: ‘Wake up and Be’.

The Good Companions

Sleep is a robber – it robs me of a certain kind of ‘food’ for which parts of me are craving, even though without specifically knowing what is needed. In sleep, although life is going well, one feels restless and discontented.

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Routine appears to feed the sleeping state. Going to work by car I find that if I am going to a new place, I am miles along the old route before I notice and ask ‘Where I am going?’

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Being a machine – doing everything in ‘sleep’ – is a state of consciousness. We alternate between two states of consciousness. Sleep at night and ‘waking sleep’ during our active days.

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In sleep, with the best of intentions one is unaware of the other person’s real needs and this results in misunderstandings and unhappiness all around.

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... perhaps most of mankind are ‘asleep’ because one is aware of only a small part of the whole, most of the time.

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To awaken seems to be the fundamental principle of all our work, and if this is lost from sight everything else becomes valueless.

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Firstly it seems we must be aware that we are asleep.

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At one moment you are aware of yourself in your surroundings, the next moment, not.

It feels to me like darkness and the awakening comes when there is some light.

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Waking up feels like a synchronisation with a different time scale. There are times, when the mind is still, that the experience is on quite a different scale, or level – outside time altogether – when there is a realisation of an aspect of Truth, and intense joy, a sense of belonging and oneness.

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To awake seems somehow connected with having sufficient ‘undemanding love’ for the people one meets, to remember that they too have a Divine Self.

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For man to awake means that his higher centres are aroused. This can come from outside – as when something big happens in one’s life – but if man wants to awake of his own volition, he has to find the right energy.

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When occasionally one ‘wakes up’, one remembers vividly the emotion and the circumstances, as clearly later in life as at the time.

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My drama teacher told me to taste each thing I ate at the next meal. There has never been a meal like it! And I thought I would always taste things again, but I haven’t.

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When moments of awakening are spontaneous, i.e. as a hand laid on one’s shoulder and one awakens briefly for no apparent reason, this stillness is filled with emotion – love?

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To awake is like a shift in the light, a leap into something more real, and new. However diversely felt, it always brings more sense of being: *Self-awareness*. Is one able to wake up? It begins as a consequence of doing something (or not doing something) with the right inner mixture. We make difficulties for ourselves by *trying* to wake up, just as we do by *trying* to be happy. In fact, they come naturally through the right balance of Rajas and Tamas, with Sattva prevailing between. So the best beginning is in active living, trying to keep the inner balance, and using initiative or holding back as the situation seems to require. Mr. O’s saying: ‘it is the heart that is asleep’ has many bearings: this is one of them.

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To be told that there were two higher states of consciousness, each as different as ordinary sleep is from the waking state, opened up a dazzling prospect.

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One night I saw how the whole world that I knew lived and died in a sort of medium of SLEEP and SLEEP-walking. It was, for me, an amazing revelation. I immediately

sought out Mr. O. and his answer when I told him was an amazing revelation too. He said: *'This means that from now on you are responsible.'*

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