

3 November 1980

### READING 3

At last Monday's well-attended meeting, there was some agreement about the need to re-discover an emotional approach and a simple language in order to make happier use of those 'timeless moments' of freedom from our psychological prison which nature has provided. To be practical we must take as our unit of time not the centuries of human history, but moments in the *daily* life of individuals. To the devotee on the way of 'Bhakti', the essence of True Religion would lie along those vertical lines which represent for us the 'perpetual existence of every moment' with its varying possibilities, but always to be found *inside* not outside our own nature.

We must first of all say what we mean by 'Religion' and (as so often) we can start with the pocket *Oxford Dictionary*:

*Religion*: human recognition of a superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience, effect of this on conduct etc.

*Religious*: scrupulous or conscientious (Latin, religio).

We first learnt about the existence of a 'True and inward Religion' (without any controversial outer harness and trappings) in 1962 when we had just begun to enjoy private audiences with the Shankaracharya. Seeing the temple in the grounds of the Ashram, and sitting next to the priest who was at that time present nearly every day, R. asked interpreter Jaiswal what the religion of His Holiness was. J. replied, 'Sanatan – the same religion to which my family belongs.' As he was rather vague about it, he agreed to ask H.H. next time we were alone together and he replied:

The word Sanatan is made up of two Sanskrit words which together mean the 'inner body of eternal religion'. The word 'Dharma' means the intrinsic essence or 'isness' of a thing so 'Sanatan Dharma' means the 'practice of the natural religion of the Atman' and it is the original root or core of all the religions which have somehow come from this root and taken different shapes.

Asked if it was possible to learn more about the essence of Sanatan Dharma or whether one had to be formally admitted and adopt its rituals, he said:

It is not necessary at all to embrace *our* Sanatan. Every religion contains its own Sanatan; so if each one follows his own religion truthfully and devotedly he would, for certain, be following Sanatan Dharma which is the basis of all religions and their centre.

Asked who founded and supported it he said:

It was founded back in prehistory long before any written language and kept going by all the Realized men (some of whose names you pronounce at initiation to the meditation). In the world, if we go on a long tour we take some reliable companion, and in the tour to the Atman such Realized people are our companions.

Once a king announced that he would give his kingdom to any person who would come to him at 4 o'clock. But what the king did was this:

In his capital city he put up splendid stores containing everything that can be had – jewelry, gold, silks, toys, books, works of art – anything anybody could want.

And at every gate and in every quarter, there were people (not just to sell them at bargain prices) but to give away all those things without payment, all free!

Thousands thought it was a good idea and started out to get the promised kingdom, but they let themselves be persuaded to go to the shops and satisfy their desires and enjoy themselves. So they forgot what they had set out to do and lost themselves among all those ornaments and jewels and clothes.

But one man didn't listen to any of these people; he just went straight through without letting anyone dissuade him, and met the king at the appointed time, and when he had been given the keys of the kingdom, he took over the government; while the king, following his abdication, went to the forest for peace and quiet. The first act of the new king was to put in prison all those people who were making free with somebody else's property under false pretences.

The same can be related to our work. If somebody wants the kingdom, he has to go straight inward for it, and (if he asks at the right moment and in the right way) he will get it. That is the Kingdom about which Sanatan Dharma tells.

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In the course of years and after hearing quite a number of variations of this story, we are seeing its application on the subtle (psychological) level. The quotation 'one man who met the King at the appointed time' is always the Atman whose voice and presence must be distinguished by any individual from the multitude of 'I's' who forget what they set out for.

The subtle body recalls all this but the unified state is the causal state of the Atman and one should reach that. Then, when one comes out of meditation, one would see that during all the activities of the world one does not identify oneself with thought or feeling, hand or foot, etc. One remains the Atman and gets all these servants to recognize his sovereignty and work for Him.

(Record, 1972, p.51)

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