

23 November 1981

READING 8

BHAKTI – THE WAY OF LOVE

To continue our delightful task of penetrating deeper and deeper into the real meaning of the Shankaracharya's teaching, we must understand some things from those of our translators who know him really well. Shri Jaiswal reminded me that our word 'intellect' comes from two Latin words (*inter* and *lego*) and means 'to read between the lines', and that is one function of the 'Overseer' ('Buddhi') which should do just that, because it sits in the middle and sees both sides of human nature, the inner and the outer. Another friend, Shri Narayan his private secretary (whose food H.H. prepares with his own hands when they are staying together), has explained that there are two things – the *Word* and its *meaning*. The Creator said the Word and creation is the expression of its meaning. (H.H. agreed that our Gospel of St. John begins the same way.)

About 10 years ago my wife and I really started to try to put his ideas into practice. At New Year 1972, I wrote to him two letters (one outlining what we have since called the 'New Year Programme' which I had been practising and will hope to revive this New Year) and I got two separate answers both dated January 14th.

Here is my question in the second letter with its answers:

3 January 1972

Q. I find it comparatively easy to think about the Param-Atman particularly in connection with the Laws of Nature in the universe and in man and in seeing that all that is going on in the outside world, whether it looks good or bad, is a part of One Param-Atman; but I would greatly appreciate help in developing a love or devotion to the Param-Atman, through what I suppose would be the practice of Bhakti. My capacity for love seems to be such a feeble thing and it is shown in the way I keep making demands upon you as our Teacher, instead of feeling for you (and your wishes) as Shankaracharya and living up to the Holy Tradition.

Reply 14 January

S. You have asked for help in developing love or devotion to the Param-Atman through the practice of Bhakti, stating that your own capacity for love seems feeble. You should not worry on this account. Rather, you should remind yourself that the Path of Love is that very path on which Param-Atman is pouring all His Favours and blessings all the time. Love and True Knowledge are two names for one and the same thing, which is a natural manifestation of the Atman and it comes to the surface spontaneously when the Antahkaran concentrates. Then you get the 'feel' of it.

Through your beneficial and holy efforts, let your own fullness see the fullness of the Param-Atman, and let the practice, the practitioner and the object of practice merge together to form one single identity. Then the world as such disappears and the Param-Atman appears in its place. This summarises the philosophy of Bhakti through love.

In a talk to the people in his Ashram at Allahabad on 29th April 1972 which was relayed to us by a third translator (the late R. L. Dixit) he said:

Love is the motive force behind all the processes at work in the world to sustain it. They could never be sustained without love. In the case of human life, its examples are the love of parents, the love of brothers, the love of friends and colleagues, etc. Even the behaviour of insects and moths seems to be based on some form of love.[†] So much so, that the ultimate cause of hostility is also love. Because hostility springs up when love is hindered. Thus a duality of love and hostility prevails everywhere. We want a thing that we love; if we do not get it, we turn hostile.

A love free from the above duality is true Love. The whole drama enacted by Param-Atman depicts this one thing only. But there is none to understand it.

As it were, a perennial game of hide-and-seek seems to be going on. We are all seeking something. Some seek it in annihilation, some in creation, some in light, some in darkness, some in intellect, etc. Actually it is Param-Atman that all are seeking, and Param-Atman is hidden in all these and in everything else. But, while seeking, people have forgotten what actually they are seeking for.

(Continues with first story in Reading 3, 19th October 1981)

[†](I have often thought the horrid scorpion is in fact the best of mothers, for she carries all her 12 offspring on her back everywhere she goes, and treats them with exemplary care and tenderness. I've seen them, both in Ceylon and Mexico but find it difficult to see 'love' in those horrific matings of scorpions and tarantulas shown on film in David Attenborough's repeat TV series *Life on Earth*! Just as difficult as to see any Love of God in the horrible things mankind is doing in the name of religion all over the world just now. We seem to have to change our whole point of view and accept *everything* as part of the Creator's Drama – even ourselves!)

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