

25 June 1973

READING 6**PRACTICAL ADVICE**

This week you would, I am sure, benefit at your 'quiet' meetings by reflecting carefully on these practical answers to some questions of mine, given by the Shankaracharya in a letter dated 15th February, 1973.

Today's system of psychology must start with that capacity for observation provided by the frontal lobes of the brain, to which all men are given direct access. These are constantly subject to three aspects of energy – excitement, depression and awakening – “Yes” and “No” and something more besides'. This advice shows us how to make this aspect of the Law of Three a really practical proposition:

Replies to questions from R.

1. S. You want to know what, from all the discourses you have had with me so far, what exactly is the most important for you today? My difficulty is that, unless I can recall all you asked and all I said in reply, I cannot be in a position to say that. Roughly, however, it may suffice to indicate that the gist of all that should be:

a) Outwardly, in words and actions you devote your body to universal service, considering yourself the servant of everyone who looks to you.

b) Devotionally, you give importance to the Supreme Power, keeping in mind its unlimited benevolence.

c) Intellectually, you identify yourself as One with Param-Atman, who witnesses everything and shows Himself in all the forms you see.

2. You say: 'It seems impossible to give it all up just yet, but I can keep it usually to only 2 days a week...'

Now, giving up can be done mentally and emotionally at all times and in all conditions. In this, there is no question of today or tomorrow, or of one or two days a week. Practise giving up all the time. You just consider the body, the mind and the intellect as belonging to Param-Atman, and as such, offering all these to Param- Atman. This is what 'giving up' means.

3. You seem to ask how to maintain Sattva.

If Rajas and Tamas arise during the prevalence of Sattva, then they would be ineffective. For this, you should off-and-on recall the idea of your real Self, and at the same time keep yourself engaged in doing service (which is your duty). Then, because of Sattva intervening between Rajas and Tamas, the latter would not affect your psyche (Antahkarana) notably. Only a little Sattva will cure much Rajas and Tamas, just as a drug or a small quantity of a hormone [like insulin] cures a big disease. Or, say, just as a lighted match can burn up a mountain of cotton.

All this is confirmed by the personal observation that Rajas and Tamas exert their influence chiefly on the dominant frontal lobe (the left side in most people, because connected with the functions of speech and action), whereas the passive lobe (right side) only exerts its proper influence when fully charged with Sattva. The two are intimately connected by an energy switch, so that when one gets tired the other takes over.

COMMENT

This instruction, when practised patiently day by day, seems to contain all that is necessary for the 'setting up of attention' both for Self-realization and for day-to-day living, if one substitutes for the personal 'I' some thought of the Param-Atman as being above all other considerations.

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You had been promised a 'new look' at the teaching in our Western System on the three stages in attention as applied to the most important departments latent in human nature. So much has changed, however, since Mr. Ouspensky defined these in his 6th Psychological Lecture given during the 1930's, both in relation to the discoveries of science and our own discoveries through practising the Meditation and the Shankaracharya's teachings, that it still remains a study for further research.

A fresh description has been prepared and a few copies will be available later this week for those who are qualified for, and interested in, such a research. We found, for instance, that Mr. Howitt – the leader of those New Zealand people who are now with us – has reached almost the same conclusions independently; so it is work which could be valuable in different parts of the world as well as here, and you may be able to give some time to it over the Summer vacation.

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