

20 May 1974

READING 5

ON 'BEING CONSISTENT' CONTD.

Next Monday will be Bank Holiday, but as this theme of 'consistency' is so interesting and important, here are two further questions about it so that you will be at least three weeks on this subject altogether.

[The first of these is best kept for those who are conversant with P. D. Ouspensky's teaching on the six activities of man.]

M.A (18) Does what you have said signify a certain order of action? You mentioned twice: 'Begin with feeling, then speak what you feel and do what you say.' Is this *order* important?

S. It is not only important but necessary, for this is the ultimate way in which things have to come about. It belongs to the pattern of Nature. Though sometimes things happen naturally this way, yet through ignorance we do not follow this sequence and so we complicate our lives. Ordinary man – common man – does not go by this sequence. But it needs to be followed by people who want to make progress on the Way.

(Record, 18 January 1974)

[Note: I believe this sequence to be the same triad described by Mr. Ouspensky as the highest of the six possible combinations of the Three Forces when applied to the activities of man: Pure Emotion → Mind → Action.]

*

During our further talks (which you will be hearing in due course), His Holiness developed the method for the practical attainment of Unity by dedicating our thoughts, feelings and actions to the single ideal of the Param-Atman (for whom the fully Realized man is our visible 'stand-in'). It was not till our last audience that we returned to the theme of 'consistency' but, as his answer is so relevant to our present conversations, it seems better to jump ahead and include it at this point:

R. (55) In trying to dedicate one's actions to the Param-Atman, one finds there is much unworthiness in our thoughts, our words and our casual postures and actions that one could not possibly dedicate to the Supreme Self. If one wants to do what one says and say what one thinks, it seems to be a full-time job!

S. In dedicating to the Absolute or to the Self, the most important part is the *heart*, and that is very simple. If that is properly achieved in its simplicity, all the rest should not bother one, because nothing else is very important. One can see from so many examples that this is so. Here is one:

There was a great elephant who was proud of his size and strength, but when he went for a bath he was caught by a crocodile in mid-stream and dragged out of his depth into the deep water. He was helpless and couldn't do anything; but just when he was about to be drowned he happened to catch with his trunk a lotus flower floating on the river, and offering that flower to the Absolute, to his God, he begged Him to save his life. So pure was his offering, that the God came running barefoot from his throne.

One might wonder how one could dislodge the Absolute to come barefoot from His throne by just a little flower! But it was not the flower, it was the spirit behind the flower – it was the heart which prayed.

(Record, 24 January 1974)

*

The Shankaracharya gave several other illustrations, of which this homely example from family life may appeal to us now:

A father does everything he can for his child, and while feeding him sitting on his lap, the child might take a little of the food and try to put it into his father's mouth. Now, that tiny piece of food which the child puts into the father's mouth pleases him so much that he goes into ecstasy; then all the troubles brought on by the child are forgotten.

We must understand that the Absolute, or the Atman, is not really interested in the details of our bad behaviour, but wants the human heart in its simplicity and directness. When *that* has been dedicated, everything will follow in the course of time, and one need not worry whether man's actions are small or big, good or bad, efficient or inefficient. That doesn't matter – the real dedication He requires is only of the heart.

(*ibid*)

SUMMARY

Someone sent me this quote, which happens to come from an Indian scripture, but carries the taste of the *Mathnawi* and the Sufis:

The fox looks after himself, but God looks after the lion.

We have been assured that as long as we have love for the Divine Self we are really lions, though we forget it because of all the other animals in the zoo!

* * *