

11 March 1975

READING 7

We should remind ourselves this week of the synopsis of the Shankaracharya's teaching given in last week's paper to see how it could work out in practice:

We have to bring our inner Nature into line by transcending the inherent bad habits that we have contracted; for all these bad habits can be bypassed by establishing one overall good habit, namely the habit of substituting for all personal claims that everything is part of the Universal Consciousness and its laws.

Look at our day. It starts with the act of getting out of bed. From that moment the body (if left to itself) becomes a puppet governed entirely by outside influences until it creeps into bed at night. That sensory-motor apparatus is the machine driven by the dynamo of physical life, taking with it our feelings and the thoughts dictated by them. We would only waste energy and lose efficiency by trying directly to alter any of those external pulls; for the programme for any particular day is already (barring accidents) determined.

There is nothing wrong with that programme. Any danger it could bring to us can be neutralised, but it needs an inner dedication. Instead of letting our personal ego be the centre of our mental universe (which it is when our attention is elsewhere) we should patiently form the habit of dedicating actions, feelings and thoughts to the impersonal concept: 'I am the observing Self, who witnesses everything and reveals its own Nature in all that we perceive.'

When our attention is fully demanded by what we are doing, we are in little danger, being like the arrow-maker shaping the point of his arrow. But if some of our attention is disengaged (as it is most of the time we are carrying out the familiar routine) that attention should not be allowed to stray into the illusory world of 'past' and 'future'. We should continue to do what immediately confronts us from moment to moment, with some attitude like: 'This is service to the Param-Atman, and should be done as if facing such a noble guest.'

Start today to form this habit, and then we would not be confronted with a hopeless situation when we sit to meditate. We would not have to waste the half-hour fighting with all the backlog of restless feelings and thoughts. Diving straight to the Source of energy in the first two minutes, we would taste the sweetness of renunciation and want only to enjoy it for as much of the half-hour as we can. Emerging with enhanced energy and sweetness, we would happily face whatever must come. As Christians, moreover, we would be acting out the Prayer which Christ himself gave:

Our Father which art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Then, as a bonus, we should receive exactly what He said, namely, miraculous food for the mind, a delightful change in our relations with other people, and a deliverance from evil.

This single good habit could simultaneously renew the physical and subtle bodies, and will, in time, bring up the latent possibilities of the Causal body with its threefold Nature – the Power, the Kingdom, and the Glory.

And even if one is pretending to be a thorough 'scientist' or a professional unbeliever, one might still find this to be the only way of bringing all three divisions of the nervous system (moving, emotional and intellectual) into full service during an active life. If so, don't *believe* it – just try it!

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