

30 May 1977

READING 5

THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS

My subject tonight is the Alchemy of Happiness. The highest state of the soul in the Sanskrit language is called Atman which means happiness or bliss itself... Today we often confuse happiness with pleasure. Pleasure is only an illusion of happiness, a shadow of happiness, and in this delusion man perhaps passes his whole life seeking after pleasure, and never finding satisfaction... (Happiness is a state of the inner man and is not dependent upon outside things). The one who is happy is happy everywhere; in a palace or a cottage, in riches or poverty, for he has discovered the fountain of happiness which is situated in his own heart...

Happiness cannot be bought or sold, nor can you give it to a person who has not got it. All religions, all philosophical systems have taught men in different forms how to find it... and wise men in some form or another give a method... and have called this process Alchemy. Their stories are full of the belief that there is a Philosopher's stone that would turn metal into gold by a chemical process... gold calls for light or inspiration... a person who follows a religion and has not come to the realisation of Truth, of what use is his religion to him if he is not happy? A religious person must be happier than one who is not religious... otherwise the form is being kept but the spirit lost.

The whole process of making gold is described by the Alchemists in a symbolical way. They say gold is made out of *mercury*; the nature of mercury is to be ever moving, but by a certain process the mercury is first stilled, and once stilled it becomes *silver*; the silver then has to be melted, and on to the melted silver, the juice of a herb is poured, and then the melted silver turns into gold... The real interpretation of this process is that mercury represents the nature of the ever-restless mind realised especially when a man tries to collect his attention... Such is the nature of mind, it becomes more restless when you desire to control it; like mercury it is constantly moving. When by collecting the attention one has mastered the mind, one has taken the first step... but for this stilling of the mind a special method is necessary and is taught by the mystic; just as singing is taught by the teacher of voice production.

When the mind is under complete control, and no longer restless, one can hold a thought at will as long as one wishes. This is the beginning of phenomena; but some abuse these results, and by dissipating the power, they destroy the silver before turning the silver into gold. The silver must be heated before it can melt, and with what? – with that warmth which is the Divine Essence in the heart of man which flows out as sympathy, humility, unselfishness in a stream of a thousand drops... The moment this happens, the man really lives; he has unsealed the spring of happiness which overcomes all that is jarring and inharmonious.

After the heart is warmed by the Divine element; which is love, the next stage is the juice of the herb which is the influence of Truth itself. The love of Truth alone is not sufficient, knowledge of the Truth is clearly necessary. Knowledge of Truth strengthens man's belief in the Truth, throws light on the individual and on life. Things become clear; every leaf on a tree becomes a page of a holy book to one whose eyes are open to the knowledge of God. When the juice of the herb is poured on to the heart and warmed by the love of one's fellow men, then that heart becomes the heart of gold, the

heart that expresses what God would express. This man has not seen God, but he has seen the reflection of God in man, and when this is so, then everything that comes from this man comes from God himself.

That in brief is the 'Alchemy of Happiness,' which can be put into operation at any moment when one remembers to do it.

COMMENT

The quotation (above) is part of a pamphlet of unknown origin which came to us years ago. Though it uses the title coined by the eleventh century Sufi Al-Ghazzali, 'The Alchemy of Happiness,' it seems to come from a different source.[†] We now see it as a good description of the first four stages of the Impressions Octave (Hydrogens 48, 24, 12 and 6).

When we introduced this (in February 1958) we were asked: 'What is the first sign we can observe (in ourselves and others) of the results of the stilling of this mercury and the making of the silver?'

In reply we quoted from one of Mr. Ouspensky's meetings in 1942.

Q. Shall we be able to judge the change of our Being without deceiving ourselves? And on what does the difference in level among ordinary sleeping people depend?

P.D.O. On *reliability*. There are more reliable people and less reliable people. This is also true in the work. Unreliable people don't get anything permanent and cannot be used.

And now in 1977, regular meditation, regularly attending a group – all this is both training in reliability and helping us to find the people on whom we can rely. And the happier we all are, the better!

* * *

[†][Now known to have been written by Hazrat Inayat Khan.]