

Sixth ConceptStart with Meditation

We continue our study of Sanatan Dharma with the Sixth Concept, *Indriya Nigraha*:

Indriya Nigraha. is a natural course of use of the senses, and those can be regulated. The rules are prescribed in every tradition, and from these one has to learn to use one's senses within those limitations. One does not curb the use of the senses but regulates them. The curbing of excessive use will then take place naturally.

So what is the purpose of our senses? And how does one regulate them?

We are told by the Shankaracharya that the purpose of our senses is to acquire knowledge. Through the senses we experience the world.

Do we not have a problem here in that the senses, which pertain to the subtle body, are given to us to experience the world, but then our ego gets greedy and wants more of this and less of that. Numerous desires then come into play and before we know it we become 'identified' and the Observer, the Atman in us is pushed into the background and we lose our Attention and in this way the '*natural course of the use of the senses*' ceases to be regulated.

Writings from the Philokalia translated from the Russian text Dobrotolubiya By Mrs E Kadloubovsky (Mr Ouspensky's secretary) and G E H Palmer, describe the four stages of identification that can ensnare the individual.

The essence of the message of St Philopheus of Sinai is to be found on page 63 and 64 of the Voyage of Discovery which is now put together in a certain order, for the purpose of this paper. The original translation is to be found on page 338 and 339 of the Philokalia (pub. Faber and Faber)

Stage One: Each of us has to guard his senses. First comes *impact* (prosvole – contact, when a thing thrown hits the thing at which it is thrown) ie Impressions fall on the mind; they are as yet indifferent; there is no identification yet.

Stage Two: Then comes *coupling* (syndyasmōs – joining together; attention is fettered by the object so that there exists only the mind and the object which has occupied it.) The attention is attracted to a particular set of impressions and forms a guilty union with them. If a man is watching his **attention**, he can see this early stage and free himself; otherwise the rest is inevitable.

Stage Three: Next comes *merging together* (synousia – the object which has occupied the attention has provoked desire, and the mind has consented to it, has merged with it, thus going into captivity. The object has captivated the mind which desired it and is leading it into action like a fettered slave.) Synousia is the word for sexual connection. Now that the attention has completely merged with the object, the man has lost his identity – he has become something else.

Stage Four: Finally comes *passion* or suffering (pathos – sickness of the soul), indeed by frequent repetition and by habit, so that it has now become a feature of the character. Once the third stage has been established a man returns again and again to the object of his identification, like a drug addict, he cannot stop himself.

Now, Indriya Nigraha is about judgement and common sense, and not having one's judgement obscured by attachment.

It is a particularly relevant and important concept to those on the Fourth Way, the way 'in life'. This is the way of understanding as opposed to the monastic way of obedience.

We have to learn to regulate our senses through our own discrimination. At university, unlike being at school, you don't get ordered to do anything. It is up to oneself to understand what is required. According to Mr Ouspensky we should start with what we know, accept nothing, then act from our growing understanding.

Valuation is an important aspect of this process and the Shankaracharya Santanand Saraswati points this out when he explains how a monkey is ensnared:

When monkeys have to be caught, there is a trick in doing so. A round earthen pot with a small mouth is buried in the open ground. An eatable object with an inviting smell is put inside. When monkeys get the scent they come close and put their hand inside and clench the object which restricts pulling out. The monkey doesn't know he can be free. He doesn't want to release the thing and yet wants to be free, so he cries and doesn't run away. That is the moment when the hidden man appears and catches the monkey for his own use.

Pause

Valuation and right judgement should tell the man or woman on the fourth way that it is totally lacking in common sense to hang onto a banana in an earthen pot and lose one's liberation for something that is provided in abundance in nature. But that is what identification does.

The Shankaracharya continues:

Most of the people who think they are not free are acting like this monkey. They are holding on to something, maybe things of beauty, fragrance or taste. Only if they could release their hold, they are free, because in truth they are free. And all our knowledge which is at our service is made available to everyone simply to show to the people that all this beauty is the creation of your own self, free to be appreciated and create bliss which is all you want.

Dr Roles made his breakthrough both for members of the Study Society and himself when he realised: 'I have nothing of my own'. The Shankaracharya then told him that this was the best realisation possible.

The doctor explains in the 'Voyage of Discovery': *Suddenly you get a second realisation "Everything in the world is in me and I am in everything in the world. The whole universe is mine"* (p103)

Could this be construed as a transition in Consciousness on the Ladder of Self Realisation from 'Insight' (Self Consciousness) to 'Abundance' (Cosmic Consciousness).

Now we see that everything in the universe is there for us to use as appropriate, **but not to possess**, because it belongs to the Absolute. Hence the only thing we have to give up is the '**sense of ownership**'. Then all attachments are severed. Once one understands and applies this simple principle, then the sixth concept of Sanatan Dharma, *the curbing of excessive use of the senses will take place naturally*.

