

Tenth ConceptStart with Meditation

The tenth concept of Sanatan Dharma is Akrodha.

Akrodha means that one should never get agitated under any circumstances. There may be occasions when a hard line is very necessary, usually for the purpose of education, but taking a hard line is not necessarily getting agitated. One can tell the difference between righteous agitation or wrong agitation. If one is wrongly agitated one cannot take right action so this has to be avoided.

Sanatan Dharma is a code of behaviour prepared at the highest level for humankind. The tenth concept is to help us to take right action in life as we progress in our outlook from a personal point of view to a universal point of view.

In this process we move from looking at the world from a dualistic viewpoint to one of unity. We begin to see we are not separate individuals competing with one another on the Darwinian basis of the 'survival of the fittest' but rather that we are all one and we are expected to play our part in an unfolding drama directed by Param-Atman.

The Shankaracharya explains:

In everything everywhere, we see Param-Atman. The feeling you have for your family grows to include your community, then your nation, and then the the world; from being limited we become unlimited and the whole world becomes our family, and we have the feeling 'everything is mine and I belong to everybody'.

Obviously in this process we need to eliminate from our psyche that kind of personal agitation which prevents us taking right action.

So firstly, what makes one agitated? It seems to be frequently connected with another person's opinion or action that does not concur with one's own particular brand of truth. Perhaps we would see the other person's point of view and understand their behaviour better (though not necessarily agree with it) if we took up the Doctor's suggestion and substituted our personal point of view with the universal point of view. He goes on to say:

There is nothing wrong with our lives, but only the view we are taking of them and of ourselves. The awakened Buddhi, seeing with the eye of Atman will decide for you what will be useful to its master (Param-Atman). So it is the Buddhi that must be kept clear and free from the effects of ignorance, identification and distraction. Stillness comes the moment your mind is free. What a load of trouble we'd escape that way.

Another way of putting the situation is that we prefer others to see the world through the colour we have in our bottle rather than through the colour in someone else's bottle. Is that worth getting agitated about?

The Shankaracharya tells an amusing story about this situation. There was a husband who was a lawyer and a wife who came from a family of doctors. One day they were having a heated argument as to what profession their son should take up – legal or medical. A wise man was asked

for his advice. He suggested that he talk to their son to find out what he thinks. At that the husband and wife had to admit that their son hadn't been born yet.

Mr Ouspensky told us that negative emotions disappear if we do not try to justify them and when talking about anger the Shankaracharya has this to say:

There are situations where opposition will arise, even if one is pure, because of the opposition, some vikshepa takes over and anger follows, this will not be wrong.....but under no circumstances should anger be allowed to live in the heart of a man who is looking for transformation.

Both these statements lead us to see that the aspect of emotion that is the problem is not the reaction itself, but actually the reverberating circuits of thought that can arise from it.

The Shankaracharya points out that sometimes it is permissible to act crossly for the purposes of education and this is confirmed in one of his amusing mythological Hindu stories:

A number of holy men were going through a forest and they happened to see a large snake. They realized that, owing to misdeeds, some person had been turned into this snake, and the snake was turned back into human form. This man told the holy men that in a previous life he had troubled quite a number of people and the result of all his sins was that he was turned into a snake. He begged the holy men to advise him how to escape from this situation. The holy men said the cure was not to trouble anyone any more, so, while a snake he should not bite anyone, and if he did this, in the course of time he would be liberated. They then went on their way.

This man, in the form of a snake, stopped biting anyone. Slowly all the villagers, who used to come to collect fruit or wood or anything from the jungle and who always threw stones at him, found that this did not disturb him, there was no reaction, so they started coming closer and the stones hit him. Even then nothing happened, so they took some sticks and started beating him, and pulled his tail, and dragged him all over the place. All sorts of trouble befell this snake, but because he had promised not to bite he kept quiet and endured his sufferings.

After a number of months the holy men were returning through the same forest and saw this same snake lying there with all his bruises, and they asked what was happening to him. He said their advice was not to take action against anybody and he had followed their advice to the letter and this was the result because everyone attacked him. So the holy men said they had only told him not to bite or hurt people, but they had not forbidden him to hiss – he could hiss, but did not have to bite! They went on their way, and later when the villagers came and tried to pester the snake, he started hissing and everyone ran away and he was left in peace.

This hissing is part of the natural phenomena. Although it seems like an act, it is part of nature and it fits the situation; it was designed by the Absolute that hissing can be performed by the snake, if he is a snake, so that he can save his skin. In the same way in our daily life there are situations when such hissing is necessary as a safeguard, and one should not hesitate to resort to methods which can resolve situations without causing any change or disturbance within oneself.

Pause

By relating two of the Shankaracharya's explanations on right behaviour and action we can visualise what is expected of us. He says:

One: *Physically be everybody's servant – devote yourself to universal service.*

Then elsewhere he explains the behaviour of such people who succeed in carrying out this dictum:

The physical movements of such people are tuned to the natural rhythm, and the result is simplicity and economy of movement. They never rush into any situation, are never agitated, and perform all actions in an efficient, sublime and refined way. Whatever they do will emerge from stillness, be held in stillness, and again submerge in the same stillness which they experience in this great total immobility.

Two: *Emotionally, give importance to the Supreme Being always remembering His never ceasing good will and benevolence.*

The successful achievement of this dictum is seen in those -

....who show love and affection towards everything they encounter. All activities are initiated with love, and then held and nourished with love till they come to their fulfilment. All relationships with individuals or activities, direct or indirect, are illuminated and guided only by love and affection.

Three: *Intellectually, identify yourself as One with the Param-Atman, who witnesses everything impartially and reveals Himself in all you perceive.*

Success is seen in people whose -

...ideas, intentions or motives are pure and simple. Purity and simplicity widen the horizon, and they think and work for the whole of humanity and only through the laws of the Absolute. The divisions of groups, races or nations disappear and only natural laws are employed. Their thoughts naturally encompass the whole of the human family, and its intrinsic goodness.

The Shankaracharya concludes by saying that these are the ideas or standards for the common man or devotee to aspire to, if he somehow awakes to the need to improve his state.