

Start with Meditation

One of the subjects suggested that we might look at this term is Advaita.

Advaita means 'not two', and is the fundamental principle behind our teaching. And it requires considerable study and observation to grasp the many ideas involved in this subject.

Doctor Roles made the following important statement:

*I have come to believe that it is a non-dualistic approach that is the ultimate solution to all our problems. It would be good if we could enter this third millennium with such an approach expressed for the first time in current Western terms. (Voyage of Discovery p122)*

In our teaching there is an important practice known as Sinhavalokan. This has been described by the Shankaracharya as the practice of the tiger who stops at certain moments to look back on his tracks in order to measure how far he has come.

The beginning of 2012, exactly thirty years since the Doctor's death, is a further opportunity to look back again to see how far we have come in our understanding of the basic principle of Advaita.

Let us start with the philosophy of Non-Dualism, as expounded by the original Shankara:

*Brahman (Param-Atman) – the absolute existence, knowledge and bliss – is real. The world is not real. Brahman and Atman are One. (Crest Jewel of Discrimination - Viveka Chudamani).*

What are the implications of this statement 'real' and 'not real'. The original Shankara only accepts as 'real' that which neither changes nor ceases to exist.

So now we have to ask ourselves what is 'real' or permanent in oneself, and what is not and only temporary.

Pause for discussion

In the 'Crest Jewel' the Shankara's exposition continues:

*Absolute reality implies permanent existence.....What then is the 'Reality' behind all our experiences. There is only one thing that never leaves us – the deep consciousness. This alone is the constant feature of all experience. And this consciousness is the real Absolute Self.*

So, first things first. According to the Shankaracharya we have to realise the true Self. That is what Self Realisation means.

In the Greek tradition, the basic principle is 'know thyself'. P D Ouspensky's teaching was based on finding and establishing 'Real 'I' or Permanent 'I' within ourselves. And Doctor Roles had this to say on the subject:

*The first stage is Self-discovery – when you have eliminated everything that is not 'I', everything changeable, everything to which you can apply the word 'this' or 'that', only then will you know who you really are'.*

Our main problem at our present stage is that we seem to be governed a large percentage of the time by the ever changing 'I's' or 'desires' in our personality. These give rise, as is well described in Prospero's lines in *The Tempest*, to what can be interpreted as a state of identification referred to below as it

*Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.....*

Now how to escape from this sleep? That is the question. How to move out of the little house with bars in the window and move into the mansion with plenty of servants and rich furnishings. Is that not the change in our psyche that we all really want?

In order for that to happen we are continually advised to try and establish an Observer. He is really always there in our deep consciousness but he has to be brought into the foreground. Is that not why the Shankaracharya advised us to pause between activities in order to carry out this practice of living in the Now through placing the attention on the Observer.

This effort and the practice of meditation, whereby the mantra is brought into the foreground of one's attention creates a silent awareness. This reality is often tasted when after meditation we open our eyes and the silent Observer sees the surroundings as they really are in the serenity of that moment. Is this not a taste of 'Self Remembering' which Mr Ouspensky talks about?

For Self Realisation a method is an essential practice. Doctor Roles spoke on this matter when he said:

*In meditation we begin to be what we are. Everything drops off and we are just ourselves.*

He goes on to show us that Truth cannot just be rationalised, it has to be experienced:

*In the moment when one realises that one's separate 'I' has no real existence, and that one has nothing of one's own, one realises that one is the same as the Absolute and therefore heir to everything in creation.*

#### Pause for discussion

Rumi, who founded the Turning confirms that 'one is the same as the Absolute', when he wrote:

*Don't think saying "I am God" is proclaiming one's greatness, it is actually total humility. Someone who says "I am the servant of God" infers two – God and himself, whereas someone who says "I am God" negates himself, he relinquishes his own existence. "I am God" means I don't exist, everything is God, only God exists. I am nothing. I am utter emptiness. This is complete humility, not arrogance, but people often misunderstand. When someone says he is God's servant he still sees himself as a doer, albeit in God's service, he is not yet drowned in the Ocean of God. When he is, there will be no such thing as his actions, only movements in the water.*

Next week we will continue with this discourse in order to see how it is men and women keep looking upon themselves as the doer and what more we have to do to correct this attitude.