

Another Point of View

Last week we looked at a modern quotation describing the Fourth Way in much the same terms as when it first appeared in the West around a 100 years ago. It spoke of the profound transformation that can arise from the effort required by the sincere search in oneself for Truth; the realization of one's own nothingness; and the struggle that arises when we voluntarily concentrate upon the positive and negative tendencies of our ordinary psychology.

Although thousands of people around the world still try to practice this form of the teaching, preserving the original formulations of knowledge as a 'holy text', to be puzzled over but seldom questioned, the *form* of the Fourth Way teaching that we try to practice here at Colet House has changed radically in many ways. It has changed because the people who came before us, Mr Ouspensky and Dr Roles, realised that the teaching can manifest only through practice, and this means, in one sense, that there is no such thing as 'the teaching' — in reality, there is only the teacher. It is the practical example, arising from and demonstrated by the being of the teacher that provides whatever possibilities are available.

This is perhaps why we here today are functioning at such a lowly level, and why we must attempt, once again, to manifest the reality of this extraordinary teaching from the basic inner material of our lives and our daily existence. We can't conceivably call ourselves anything like Teachers, (with a capital T) nor even Disciples (ditto). Nevertheless, we have a true map, and much time has been spent studying and orienting it as best we can to show the way home from where we are now; yet still, the terrain remains to be travelled and negotiated, with as much sincerity and determination and love as we can muster. This is what groups are for, good company for each other on this most magical of journeys, and where the end may be, as the poet says, *'to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.'*

It is time for us to look more closely at the nature of the obstacles that seem constantly to restrain and divert our easy progress to the 'home' that we remember so clearly in our heart of hearts, but before we start on this it may be helpful to consider a different but essentially similar point of view from one of the greatest Advaitins, Sri Nisargadatta. He says:

N. The Teacher is little concerned with the person. His attention is on the [pupil's] inner watcher, [the silent witness]. It is the task of the watcher to understand and thereby eliminate the person. While there is Grace on one side, there must be dedication to the task on the other.

Q. But the person does not want to be eliminated!

N. The person is merely the result of a misunderstanding. In reality, there is no such thing. Feelings, thoughts and actions race before the watcher in endless succession, leaving traces in the brain and creating an illusion of continuity. A reflection of the watcher appears in the mind and creates the sense of 'I' and so this [illusory] person acquires an apparently independent existence. In reality there is no person, only the watcher identifying itself with the 'I' and the 'mine'.

The teacher tells the watcher: you are not this, there is *nothing* of yours in this, *except the little point of 'I am', which is the bridge between the watcher and his dream.* 'I am this, I am that' is the dream, while pure 'I am' has the stamp of reality on it. You have tasted so many things — all came to naught. Only the sense 'I am' persisted — unchanged. Stay with the changeless among the changeful, until you are able to go beyond.

Q: When will it happen?

N: It will happen as soon as you remove the obstacles.

Q: Which obstacles?

N: Desire for the false and fear of the True. You, as the person, imagine that the teacher is interested in you as a person. Not at all. To him you are rather a nuisance and a hindrance to be done away with. He actually aims at your elimination as a factor in consciousness.

Q: If I am eliminated, what will remain?

N: Nothing will remain, yet all will remain. The sense of identity will remain, but no longer identification with a particular body. Being, awareness and love will shine in full splendour. *Liberation is never of the person, it is always from the person.*

(from *I am That*, p. 326)

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Practical.

Make a list of the three most important things you know about self-remembering.

Whatever they are, hold each one up to the first paragraph on this page. Report back.