TOWARDS A PRACTICE

PART 3. JUDGING

There was a sharp divide in the response to last week's paper as regards observing one's own psychology, with the dividing line set at about 72 years of age! Those in the upper age bracket will be relieved to hear that we are not to pursue the matter this week, though a couple of the quotations relate to it. But the level of our knowledge of the mind is seriously adrift compared with what is coming out from studies of normal psychology and neurology, and we should at some point make an effort to bring our knowledge up to date in the way that Dr Roles used to do for us.

Most people agreed that the idea of trying to be *impartial* towards one's inner mental state was valuable and part and parcel of detachment. Impartiality, not being judgemental, comes into our systems of knowledge in a more general context. It is an extremely difficult area: on the one hand we are expected in our Western society to hold strong opinions and to be highly critical – otherwise you are boring and brainless – but on the other hand the path to non-dualism, or trying to see things from the point of view of Real I, seems to demand the opposite approach.

There is an extraordinary saying from the desert fathers:

> Abba Joseph said to Abba Poeman, 'Tell me how to become a monk.' He said, 'If you want to find rest below and hereafter in all circumstances say, 'Who am I?' And do not judge anyone.' [*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. Benedicta Ward]

There is similar observation by Rodney Collin Smith:

> We will never be ourselves while we have prejudice, while we try to judge. We are all mirrors for each other. We see others in reverse to the way we see ourselves. That is why we cannot judge. We must always measure, never judge. [Rodney Collin *The Mirror of Light*]

And of course we can find similar dictums in Sanatan Dharma and the Gospels, which is where we started from. Rodney Collin's contention that we must measure not judge indicates a practice we might adopt; we may have even tried it out, but before going further we should examine what it implies. What is the difference between 'measure' and 'judge'?

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We should first examine what are the real reasons for taking on 'not judging' as a practice towards self-realisation. 'Judging' normally imposes our own small view or society's small view on what we observe:

> When we look at ourselves, there are things we like and things we don't like. And we get into a lather very often about the things we don't like. We think that one is virtuous and the other is vicious. The Shankaracharya begs us to stop that very fallacious choice about characteristics which in ourselves and other people we admire whereas others we dislike. Because these likes and dislikes create conflict and unhappiness. One should take everything about oneself as part of the Divine nature, the Param-Atman, the way things are, Creation. We shouldn't praise one side of our nature and condemn another. [FCR 78/43]

In the context of trying to 'give up', FCR recommends applying the same approach to what we see in the external world as well. For the Param-Atman there is no duality, no good or bad. So the argument is that if we are trying to make the Atman more apparent in ourselves, we should try to view the world and ourselves in the same way as the Atman sees it; just as a self-realised man is always Self-conscious, so we make efforts to be more conscious.

The problem with this argument is that we really do have to try to know for ourselves what is right and what is wrong, especially in relation to or own actions. HH explains how to deal with this in the real world:

> It is essential that the unity between the Self and the Buddhi, the internal organs, must take place, and a decision must appear automatically, whether the action which is taken is right or wrong. This confidence and certainty which does come as a result of the interaction of Buddhi and the promptings from Atman must be honoured. Even if, ultimately, it turns out to be wrong this is very important.
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> For example, there was a disciple who was given a particular Mantra to worship a Goddess. The proper Mantra was Kreem, and the disciple was sounding a Mantra which was connected with Lord Krishna - Kleem - very little difference. He went on with this mantra and after some time the Goddess herself appeared and said "Look here, you are doing your Mantra wrongly - you should change it." The disciple said how could he believe his Mantra was wrong when it had materialised his Goddess in front of him - if the Mantra was wrong surely the Goddess could never have appeared before him, and he did not change the Mantra but kept on with the way he was saying it, and it is said that the Goddess was pleased.
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> If this confidence of the Self in unity with the Buddhi says that something is right, then it ought to be right whatever happens; if one decides to do something and if one is doing a right thing, yet one feels inside that it is wrong to be done, then nothing can make it right - things will go wrong whatever happens, even with the right means. Ultimately it is very difficult to say what is right or wrong! Everything has to be referred to the Atman, and if Atman says it is right, it is right, and if Atman says it is wrong, it will be wrong. [*Record* 28.10.77]

All well and good but if the Atman is not at hand, it is impossible to refer anything to it. Here is a clue about how to make it work:

> There is another source which differentiates between pure and impure Maya and that is within the Self. For those who are governed by Tamas and Rajas it is very difficult to make use of this source. Only in people who have enough Sattva within their own self, arises a voice to indicate that this undertaking is right or wrong. The call of the Self, which at first is very small and only indicative, once understood and appreciated and followed gets more strength and one can rely on that source as well. This is only for those who have enough Sattva in their being. [*Record* 10.3.70]

This discussion has deliberately been left without a resolution! The task is to make a practice for ourselves.

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