

TRAINING PURPOSES

At the end of a year's work what have we learned? Perhaps we have acquired some new knowledge, but how can any system, however complex, explain the miracle of the world and we ourselves here, in it. The western System describes a universe made from infinite variations of one single substance, where both energy and matter stem from a single unknowable unity. Advaita has a similar hierarchy of levels of consciousness and matter but goes further to point out that all this knowledge and discipline is for training purposes only.

In the early stages when people wish to be taught, and brought up to a level to appreciate the unity, it is necessary to explain the illusion of two before it can be taught that the two are one. When one is asked to love the truth, or love the Atman—or know the Atman or know the truth—in fact there is no duality. There is no lover of the truth, and there is no truth which can be loved by anybody, for these are one and the same thing—but for training purposes all these words are made use of. (21/10/1965)

Even the System, and all of our teachings, have no intrinsic reality, for they are designed from just the same materials as the illusion they intend to reveal—the removal of one thorn by another. All this knowledge serves only to allow a true compass to be created within our relative awareness that seeks out and points directly to that single crack in the dimension of time, the silent moment now, the poet's 'scallop shell of quiet' where we can begin to hear the first whisper of the ocean of the Self.

All we have learnt is directed solely to discovering the practical understanding that we have only to be still—with a little more attention—rather more often. If we can bring a professional attitude to making sure we practice this more each day it is quite certain our lives will improve. As the energy of Sattva becomes more regularly available everything runs more smoothly and quite new possibilities appear unexpectedly. But at the outset something has to be done; we do need to make efforts to give this method a fair trial. As God said to the complaining lottery loser: 'at least, meet me halfway, buy a ticket'.

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The difficulty lies only at the beginning of this process and it is only at the beginning that we need help and knowledge and encouragement. Once, so to speak, the pump has been primed, the energy flows quite naturally as long as we keep on remembering to tune in to the stillness that underlies everything we perceive. Then we can begin to take ourselves and all the affairs of this little self rather less seriously.

In System terms there is a stairway between ordinary life and the Way, and once the stairway has been negotiated the obstacles which seem so unsurmountable at the beginning can simply melt away. The Way itself is in quite another dimension where, as we have been saying for the last several weeks, there is neither time nor space, no preconceptions, and which no words can reveal.

It is only required that we rest in this stillness, quite briefly, as many times a day as we can remember. Just the simple feeling of 'I am here in this moment', and if we do this then more and more we begin to hear, or sense, the sound of the silence. Even a little of this is invaluable, for it is a source of energy as real as any electrical socket, and this practice can quite soon build up to a frequency and duration where the whole balance of our nature can be transformed. The stillness

itself is only the indication, the delineation of the crack in the surface of the temporal dimension that confines us. Where it leads we cannot know, but here, there is no teacher, no teaching, nothing that we know or imagine, only 'I' which is neither two nor even One, but something else.

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Perhaps it is necessary to learn a great deal before we can bring ourselves to believe that such a simple and natural method can be the answer to all our aspirations—and the western system does allow the complexity and apparent chaos of life to be resolved into a pattern where this essential simplicity can be understood. It is only our own tendency to favour and hang on to one sort of approach, our own personal set of concepts and preferences that we insist on believing in, which can prevent this simple and effective method from becoming available to us.

Once we supply ourselves with even a trickle of this new energy then all the apparent paradoxes around being unable to love something we do not know become resolved. Inevitably we come to be increasingly attracted to and then actually to love what we *do* know and this establishes a fundamental change of attitude to oneself and to one's life.

Instead of saying, "I am doing; I am succeeding, or I am failing," (with all the turmoil and frustration that such an attitude produces) we learn to say: "The Param-Atman is doing it all; please help me just attend quietly to my own affairs and allow my personal psychology to stop interfering with Your purposes." Then there will be time and energy to use our talents for our own true role in the drama. (72/28)

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