

UNITY

PART 4

How can one become unified, so that the saying “whatever one says, one should do; whatever one thinks, one should say, and whatever one feels one should express” becomes a reality? Dr Roles said:

When asked what was the most desirable aspect of Being for the individual to cultivate, Mr. Ouspensky would say, ‘reliability; when in doubt keep to plan.’ To-day we still choose people for our Society on the basis of reliability and not brilliant unpredictability! The Shankaracharya calls it ‘consistency’. [74/12]

But isn't it enough just to meditate and let that take care of consistency? In a talk to the SES in 1962 Dr Roles said:

There were only enigmatic remarks about this System belonging to the way of the ‘Sly Man’ who – instead of spending months of hard physical exertion and exercises, or weeks of prayer, or hours of Yogi exercises – knew how to introduce into the organism just that material which was necessary; so he would simply mix a pill and swallow it, and the results would be obtained. That was the nearest we ever got to what was in the pill. [62/67]

The pill of course turned out to be the Meditation, but there are other ingredients:

So this consistency and unity is certainly one of the ingredients of the pill which each of us has to make for himself and learn to administer to himself . . . All through the past we have had many debates on what this ‘pill’ could be. Only now do I really believe that I know what the Shankaracharya has been trying to get through into one's thick head and hard heart, and it is beginning to be clear, what the main ingredients of this ‘pill’ are, though they will be slightly different for everybody. You cannot go to Boots and have a stock ‘pill’; each person must take certain ingredients and mix them himself. He would have to test, try out and eliminate; then he would be able to take this ‘pill’ in varying doses according to the results needed . . .

It is not simply the meditation. The meditation may be a very important part – may be more important for some people than others; but I think what is meant by this ‘pill’ that the ‘clever man’ takes (I don't like the term ‘sly man’) is much more a ‘pill’ that a man with True Knowledge can make for himself and take . . . It has to do (I am sure) with the relation between his own ‘I’ – the man as an individual – and the Divine spark in each one of us – the Universal Self of the Universe, the Param-Atman. I feel that this is what a man on the Fourth Way ought to be able to do for himself – establish this relation, which must depend on a great deal of previous experience; a great deal of advice from people who know more and who have achieved more. [74/12a]

The ingredients of the pill may change with time: 'It is concocted from previous results and so becomes increasingly simple and potent.'

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One is left with the gnawing feeling that there are some major instructions buried in what the Shankaracharya said at this time. Certainly one practice that came out of it was the attempt to bear the Param Atman in mind at all times. It is worth going over what he said about the three levels very carefully, in one's own time: that is the reply in which he said that at all three levels, physical, intellectual and emotional, if one keeps to the Truth, to true Knowledge, to right meditation, one will find deeper levels.

Practice

What is one's individual pill? It is suggested that we should put aside some time each day for a week and think about this.

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System teaching (Summary of E Group 10/02)

The practice of being aware of the simple feeling of 'I' is the key to escape from the state of waking sleep, but it soon becomes clear that to develop this capacity requires a different sort of attention than we normally have. Philokalia definition of attention: 'Attention (wakefulness) is a heartfelt rest from all thought. It is the steadfast fixing and stationing of the mind in the door of the heart.'

What really needs to change, and which fortunately, in fact, is the only thing we can change, is the habitual emotional attitude towards our lives and who we think we are. So how does attention become more emotional, and begin to engage the heart as well as the mind? Though this is for individual experiment and will relate to aim . . . we have a powerful ally to help us in change of attitude: the ability of our minds and emotions to *discriminate*. In the System this is part of what is called Conscience.

Acquiring a practical habit of discrimination begins by observing what is helpful and what is not helpful towards self-realisation – or if this too grand an aim – just 'being present'. There are activities, both external and internal, that help and those that have a neutral or negative effect. The System is very precise about this – the teaching is called the Six Activities of Man – and we can start, as ever, by making our own observations.

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